National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Canada

University of Alberta

Impact of Instruction on the Argumentative Writing of Adult Academic Upgrading Students

by

Richard Merry

©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

in

Adult and Higher Education

Department of Adult, Career and Technology Education

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall, 1994

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-94955-4

Canada

Name Richard Merry

Dissertation Abstracts International is arranged by broad, general subject categories. Please select the one subject which most nearly describes the content of your dissertation. Enter the corresponding four-digit code in the spaces provided.

SUBJECT TERM

0516
SUBJECT CODE

U·M·I

Subject Categories

THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

Architecture	0729
Art History	0377
Cinema	0900
Dance	0378
Fine Arts	0357
Information Science	0723
Journalism	0391
Library Science	0399
Mass Communications	0708
Music	0413
Speech Communication	0459
Theater	0465

EDUCATION

General	0515
Administration	0514
Adult and Continuing	0516
Agricultural	0517
Art	0273
Bilingual and Multicultural	0282
Business	0688
Community College	0275
Curriculum and Instruction	0727
Early Childhood	0518
Elementary	0524
Finance	0277
Guidance and Counseling	0519
Health	0680
Higher	0745
History of	0520
Home Economics	0278
Industrial	0521
Language and Literature	0279
Mathematics	0280
Music	0522
Philosophy of	0998
Physical	0523
Psychology	0525
Reading	0535
Religious	0527
Sciences	0714
Secondary	0533
Social Sciences	0534
Sociology of	0340
Special	0529
Teacher Training	0530
Technology	0710
Tests and Measurements	0288
Vocational	0747

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND LINGUISTICS

Language	
General	0679
Ancient	0289
Linguistics	0290
Modern	0291
Literature	
General	0401
Classical	0294
Comparative	0295
Medieval	0297
Modern	0298
African	0316
American	0591
Asian	0305
Canadian (English)	0352
Canadian (French)	0355
English	0593
Germanic	0311
Latin American	0312
Middle Eastern	0315
Romance	0313
Slavic and East European	0314

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

Philosophy	0422
Religion	
General	0318
Biblical Studies	0321
Clergy	0319
History of	0320
Philosophy of	0322
Theology	0469

SOCIAL SCIENCES

American Studies	0323
Anthropology	
Archaeology	0324
Cultural	0326
Physical	0327
Business Administration	
General	0310
Accounting	0272
Banking	0770
Management	0454
Marketing	0338
Canadian Studies	0385
Economics	
General	0501
Agricultural	0503
Commerce-Business	0505
Finance	0508
History	0509
Labor	0510
Theory	0511
Folklore	0358
Geography	0366
Gerontology	0351
History	
General	0578
Ancient	0579
Medieval	0581
Modern	0582
Black	0328
African	0331
Asia, Australia and Oceania	0332
Canadian	0334
European	0335
Latin American	0336
Middle Eastern	0333
United States	0337
History of Science	0585
Law	0398
Political Science	
General	0615
International Law and Relations	0616
Public Administration	0617
Recreation	0814
Social Work	0452
Sociology	
General	0626
Criminology and Penology	0627
Demography	0938
Ethnic and Racial Studies	0631
Individual and Family Studies	0628
Industrial and Labor Relations	0629
Public and Social Welfare	0630
Social Structure and Development	0700
Theory and Methods	0344
Transportation	0709
Urban and Regional Planning	0999
Women's Studies	0453

THE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Agriculture	
General	0473
Agronomy	0285
Animal Culture and Nutrition	0475
Animal Pathology	0476
Food Science and Technology	0359
Forestry and Wildlife	0478
Plant Culture	0479
Plant Pathology	0480
Plant Physiology	0817
Range Management	0777
Wood Technology	0746
Biology	
General	0306
Anatomy	0287
Biostatistics	0308
Botany	0309
Cell	0379
Ecology	0329
Entomology	0353
Genetics	0369
Limnology	0793
Microbiology	0410
Molecular	0307
Neuroscience	0317
Oceanography	0416
Physiology	0433
Radiation	0821
Veterinary Science	0778
Zoology	0472
Biophysics	
General	0786
Medical	0760

EARTH SCIENCES

Biogeochemistry	0425
Geochemistry	0996
Geodesy	0370
Geology	0372
Geophysics	0373
Hydrology	0388
Mineralogy	0411
Paleobotany	0345
Paleoecology	0426
Paleontology	0418
Paleozoology	0985
Palynology	0427
Physical Geography	0368
Physical Oceanography	0415

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Environmental Sciences	0768
Health Sciences	
General	0566
Audiology	0300
Chemotherapy	0992
Dentistry	0567
Education	0350
Hospital Management	0769
Human Development	0758
Immunology	0982
Medicine and Surgery	0564
Mental Health	0347
Nursing	0569
Nutrition	0570
Obstetrics and Gynecology	0380
Occupational Health and Therapy	0354
Ophthalmology	0381
Pathology	0571
Pharmacology	0419
Pharmacy	0572
Physical Therapy	0382
Public Health	0573
Radiology	0574
Recreation	0575
Speech Pathology	0460
Toxicology	0383
Home Economics	0386

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Pure Sciences

Chemistry	
General	0485
Agricultural	0749
Analytical	0486
Biochemistry	0487
Inorganic	0488
Nuclear	0738
Organic	0490
Pharmaceutical	0491
Physical	0494
Polymer	0495
Radiation	0754
Mathematics	0405
Physics	
General	0605
Acoustics	0986
Astronomy and Astrophysics	0606
Atmospheric Science	0608
Atomic	0748
Electronics and Electricity	0607
Elementary Particles and High Energy	0798
Fluid and Plasma	0759
Molecular	0609
Nuclear	0610
Optics	0752
Radiation	0756
Solid State	0611
Statistics	0463

Applied Sciences

Applied Mechanics	0346
Computer Science	0984
Engineering	
General	0537
Aerospace	0538
Agricultural	0539
Automotive	0540
Biomedical	0541
Chemical	0542
Civil	0543
Electronics and Electrical	0544
Heat and Thermodynamics	0348
Hydraulic	0545
Industrial	0546
Marine	0547
Materials Science	0794
Mechanical	0548
Metallurgy	0743
Mining	0551
Nuclear	0552
Packaging	0549
Petroleum	0765
Sanitary and Municipal	0554
System Science	0790
Geotechnology	0428
Operations Research	0796
Plastics Technology	0795
Textile Technology	0994

PSYCHOLOGY

General	0621
Behavioral	0384
Clinical	0622
Developmental	0620
Experimental	0623
Industrial	0624
Personality	0625
Physiological	0989
Psychobiology	0349
Psychometrics	0632
Social	0451

University of Alberta

Release Form

NAME OF AUTHOR: Richard Philip Merry

TITLE OF THESIS: Impact of Instruction on the Argumentative Writing of Adult Academic Upgrading Students

DEGREE: Master of Education

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1994

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in this thesis, and except as herein before provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.

R. P. Merry

11215-75 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T6G OH4

September, 1994

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **Impact of Instruction on the Argumentative Writing of Adult Academic Upgrading Students** submitted by Richard Merry in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in **Adult and Higher Education**.

Charles A. Norman
Dr. C. Norman

Grace Malicky
Dr. G. Malicky

A. Konrad
Dr. A. Konrad

DATE: Sept. 23, 1994

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother, whose words of encouragement during my public school years continued to be a driving force throughout this project, and to the memory of my father, who always did everything he could to promote my education.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of writing instruction on the quality and length of argumentative essays written by adult academic upgrading students. Participants were 30 students from two Grade 10 English academic upgrading classes at a large vocational college. There were 10 male and 20 female students ranging from 19 to 45 years of age including 9 nonnative and 21 native speakers of English as well as the regular classroom teacher.

Two conditions were applied and their effects on essay writing compared. The experimental condition consisted of about 10 hours of classroom instruction over two weeks emphasizing the study of models of argumentative writing, inquiry, prewriting and feedback on a selected topic. The control condition consisted of a one-half hour introduction to a second writing topic one day before essay testing. While the researcher was available at the institution for a number of hours each day to help students with the experimental writing topic, no such assistance was provided for the control writing topic.

Argumentative essays were written by all students in response to both of these conditions and were then collected and compared for differences in length and quality. There were no significant differences between essays written in response to the two conditions in either length or quality.

It was concluded that a variety of student and instructional factors may determine the impact of instruction on adult academic upgrading students' argumentative writing. Most important may be the extent of students' participation in preparatory study and prewriting about information specific to the writing topic. It may be that adults inexperienced in argumentative writing will require more instructional time than was allotted for the present study if a significant impact on writing performance in this mode is desired.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge all of the staff at the University of Alberta who assisted me in writing this thesis. My sincere thanks to my thesis supervisor, Dr. C. Norman, and to my committee members, Dr. G. Malicky and Dr. A. Konrad. My gratitude is also extended to all of the academic and support staff in the Department of Adult, Career and Technology Education who helped me along the way. Thanks especially to Doreen Sullivan for her help in a variety of matters from beginning to end.

Many thanks to the college administrative personnel and participating classroom teacher and students who made this study possible.

Fellow students were also instrumental in the completion of this thesis. My appreciation especially to Jill Owen-Flood, Alan Rachue and Peter Loney for their encouragement and advice during various stages of this project.

Last, and certainly not least, thanks to all members of my family for their patience and sacrifice.

Table of Contents

Chapter Page

I. INTRODUCTION 1

Definition of Terms 6

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE 8

Introduction 8

Studies on the Efficacy of Writing Instruction 9

General Studies 9

Effects of Instruction on Later Writing 9

Effects of Instruction on Postinstructional Writing 12

Studies of Specific Foci of Instruction 17

Study of Models of Writing 18

Inquiry 22

Studies of Generic Instructional Activities 26

Prewriting 26

Feedback on Prewriting 31

Summary of Literature Review 36

Selection of Independent and Dependent Variables 38

Statement of the Research Problem 39

III. METHODOLOGY 41

Subjects 41

Design 42

Procedures 42
    Instructional Design for Experimental and Control Conditions 42
        Selection of Writing Topics 43
        Selection of Questions, Subtopics, and Materials 44
    Instructional Strategies for Experimental Writing Topic 45
        Introduction to the Topic 46
        Essay Writing Instructions and Guidelines 46
        Content Study and Inquiry 47
        Study of Models of Argumentative Writing 50
        Feedback on Prewriting 52
    Instructional Strategies for Control Writing Topic 52
        Topic Introduction 53
        Discussion of Topic-specific Data 53
        Orientation to Essay Writing 53
    Essay Writing Tests 54
IV. RESULTS 55
    Holistic Quality Scoring Procedures 55
    Analysis of Holistic Quality Scores 56
    Length Scoring Procedures 57
    Analysis of Length Scores 57
V. DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS 59
    Discussion 59
        Student Factors 59
            Reading Ability 59
            Information Processing Ability 61
            Participation in Discussion 61

Motivation 62

Writing Ability 63

Instructional and Testing Factors 64

Time 64

Accreditation 66

Writing Topics and Subtopics 66

Classroom Instructions 67

Testing Conditions 67

Limitations of the Study 68

Conclusions 69

Implications for Further Research 70

REFERENCES 72

APPENDIX A: Instructions and Guidelines for Essay Writing 79

APPENDIX B: Audio-visual Materials Used for Classroom Discussion 82

APPENDIX C: Literature, Vocabulary, and Comprehension Questions 83

APPENDIX D: Models of Written Arguments on Experimental Topic 89

APPENDIX E: Motivational Data Used to Introduce Control Topic..................... 92

APPENDIX F: Instructions and Guidelines for Essay Testing 93

APPENDIX G: Criteria and Prototypes for Holistic Quality Scoring..................... 95

List of Tables

TABLE 1: Observed/Expected Frequencies of Holistic Quality Scores 57

TABLE 2: Paired T test for Essay Length Differences 58

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over recent decades, the writing of adult students has received substantially less attention than has their reading. Indications of this phenomenon are apparent in adult education journals and in Canadian adult education programs. The use of reading tests such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and the California Achievement Test (CAT) in the instruction and promotion of pre-high school adult students is an example of the perceived importance of reading to these students. The focus on reading in high school equivalency tests such as the the General Educational Development (GED) test is another example. Sixty-five percent of this test is allotted to reading while only 35% is assigned to writing.

This emphasis on reading is not surprising if one considers that the ability to read is fundamental to survival in a society dominated by the flow of information through electronic or printed media. For instance, while securing employment generally requires the ability to comprehend advertisements in newspapers, most workers are expected to understand some form of written language on a regular basis. On the other hand, the need for most adults to be able to write well has been questioned. Some writers have maintained that only a small minority of literate adults will have to write regularly and seriously in connection with their jobs, while illiterate adults are likely to need writing ability even less. Educators, literacy experts, anthropologists, social psychologists and linguists have argued that for poor and socially disadvantaged peoples, oral traditions are much more important to survival than is writing ability. Similarly, recognized authors such as Marshall McLuhan (1967) have maintained that writing has fostered a process of individualism and detachment in modern society. Electronic media, with their appeal to all of the senses, will inevitably, he claimed, reduce the value of writing by encouraging unification and involvement.

In support of the value of writing ability, it has been argued that writing which is directed specifically to the needs of business and industry is becoming increasingly important to high school and college graduates (Corbett, 1981). Corbett claimed that writing ability does not have the status that it deserves because high schools and colleges do not teach technical and business writing, preferring to continue the tradition of writing in response to creative literature. Within technical schools, however, proficiency in writing has generally become a prerequisite to graduation, and increasingly, to employment and promotion in most technical occupations.

The social and personal benefits of writing proficiency have also received considerable attention, particularly from those espousing a critical theory of education. These writers have argued that writing can promote critical thinking and, in turn, emancipation from detrimental relationships with others and society as a whole. Generally, they maintain that writing can empower the individual through personal transformation gained from an increasing awareness of personal frames of reference and ways of organizing information. Erdman (1984) explained this process in terms of learning, stating that, "Writing is a process of display of what one already knows...", and, that through this display of knowledge in writing, "... the writer joins bits of information, forming new relationships and becoming aware of new connections..." (p.4). In short, to the extent that learning about oneself and of one's relationship to society occurs through this process, personal empowerment may occur. The value of writing to adults as a vehicle for exploration of the self and for personal and social transformation was supported by Mezirow (1981), who stated, "Our awareness of why we attach the meanings we do to reality, especially to our roles and relationships ... may be the most significant distinguishing characteristic of adult learning" (p. 11).

Writers in the field of adult literacy have also articulated the importance of writing to the personal and social improvement of adults. For example, Levine (1983) attacked operational definitions of functional literacy in arguing that there is too much emphasis on reading at the expense of writing, limiting functional literacy to a means of survival and subjugation rather than autonomy and personal and social transformation. He maintained,

> Writing, in all but its rudimentary forms, is omitted from existing conceptualizations of functional literacy. Yet, it is on the whole, writing competencies that are capable of initiating change. Writing conveys and

> records innovation and criticism; above all, it can give access to political mechanisms and processes, where many of the possibilities for personal and social transformation lie. (p.262)

In this vein of thought, writing has been viewed not only as means of political protest for oppressed peoples but also as an effective vehicle for participatory citizenship in a democratic society. Proposals written to politicians recommending specific actions and letters to editors of newspapers stating opinions are some examples of writing which may serve this function.

Another potential value of writing for adults is that it may improve their opportunity for success in mainstream educational institutions. While this has not been empirically demonstrated in adult education contexts, a number of researchers of high school and college students have shown significantly greater content learning in a variety of subject areas to be associated with writing. Better retention, recall and comprehension of information from specified reading passages have been observed following more writing about these passages (Collins, 1981; Langer, 1986b; Newell, 1987; Applebee and Langer, 1987; Reynolds, 1987). Explanations given by Langer and Applebee (1987) are generally representative of this research. They concluded that better recall and comprehension are results of information being manipulated in more complex ways through writing than it is for reading and study alone, and that analytic writing could best provide for this manipulation. Such writing allows writers to focus on the relationships between ideas contained in a smaller amount of information, to understand the content of this information better, and therefore to remember it more fully over longer periods of time.

A number of other subskills of content learning have also been isolated as outcomes of writing. Researchers have noted that writing assists in the abstraction, elaboration, connection and clarification of ideas, the understanding of effective organization, the perception of opposing points of view, and reasoning and thinking. While contentions about improvement in reasoning and thinking skills have been largely theoretical, such theory may be worthy of serious testing. Deficiencies in these skills have been identified by some as the most pervasive obstacles in the improvement of academic writing.

In spite of the potential benefits of writing to adult learners, writing instruction in a number of adult education contexts has been argued to be inadequate. While both the amount of time and the nature of this instruction have been implicated, some suggestions for improved instruction have also been offered.

For instance, Padak and Padak (1988) showed that while between 18% and 42% of all instruction provided in the Adult Basic Education programs studied involved writing, very little instruction was provided in the skills needed for this writing. Teachers expressed concern that there was not enough time to teach these skills in the midst of demands from other subjects. However, while it was also mentioned that students were not willing to improve their skills through out-of-class writing, teachers rarely assigned or even suggested that students write outside of the classroom. These researchers also showed that writing instruction which was provided was heavily weighted on traditional sentence level skills and suggested that more emphasis on the generation and organization of ideas is needed for adult students.

Explanation and support of the need for more time for adult writing instruction and a shift in its emphasis from surface language features to content development has come from theorists of adult literacy, discourse, the writing process and the psychology of writing. In the field of adult literacy, Kazamek (1984, 1985) explained why brief writing instruction in the surface structures of language consistently fails to improve adults' abilities in the transactional writing which dominates academic and workplace contexts. Generally, Kazamek's contention was that adult learners lacking confidence in their writing abilities can develop such abilities through an emphasis on extensive writing using readily available skills and resources. He claimed that by avoiding exercises demanding display of weaknesses such as sentence level skills and emphasizing writing about familiar content, self-deprecating adult learners are more likely to acquire the fluency essential to developing skill in transactional writing.

Others have provided further detail about the characteristics of adult students necessitating these changes in adult writing instruction and about the features of effective approaches to instruction. Taylor (1987) may typify these others. He based his demands for more instructional time and a shift from surface features skills to content development largely upon predictions that most General Educational Development (GED) students would be incapable of success on the argumentative essay writing component of the GED final test. Taylor stated, "The new writing requirement will be very difficult for 65-75% of students and large numbers will be placed in ABE or pre-GED to have time to master the material, and that virtually no one will pass the GED without formal instruction ..." (p.23). These predictions were based on the contentions that many GED students (a) are those from general English tracks in high school where very few whole compositions have been requested, (b) may suffer from various physical and perceptual problems, especially visual and hearing loss, (c) may not have learned that writing is not simply talk on paper and must make this transition in order to meet the argumentative writing requirement of the GED program, and (d) will not even know what an essay is, and so time will have to be spent discussing and illustrating this form.

Taylor maintained that the main obstacles to adult high school learners' improvement in such academic writing are deficiencies in the ability to develop and organize content. However, he observed that even the weakest students could improve their argumentation in minimal time by being placed in situations requiring them to use writing strategies readily available to them. The success of this approach would involve maximum student interaction, discussion, prewriting, and revising and maximum involvement by the teacher where needed.

A myriad of other adult education projects based on criticisms of previous practice and proposing effective approaches for improving the academic writing skills of pre-postsecondary adult students are available in the literature. However, no experimental evidence supporting the reliability of any of these approaches is apparent. The need for such evidence was perceived on the bases of this fact, the researcher's experience teaching language arts to adults, and his awareness of successful research on writing instruction in other educational contexts. It was hypothesized that instruction involving elements of previously successful experimental treatments and recognizing the theory of adult education writers on effective writing instruction would improve the transactional writing of adults seeking high school credit.

The remainder of this thesis contains a review of literature supporting this hypothesis, the procedures undertaken to test it, the results of this testing and conclusions made in regard to it. Chapter I is concluded with operational definitions of terms important to understanding the research problem. A review of research on writing instruction, a summary of this research, a rationale for the dependent writing variables studied, and statements of the problem and subproblems.are provided in chapter II. Chapter III contains descriptions of the research subjects, design, and procedures and materials used. The results of analyses of the the writing completed in response to the instructional treatment.are presented in chapter IV. Chapter V includes a discussion of results, limitations of the study, conclusions and implications for further research.

Definition of Terms

A number of concepts central to this study are defined operationally as follows.

Writing instruction. A set of planned activities which is organized to improve writing performance and which includes design and strategy. Design involves the assessment of the learning needs of students and the selection of teaching procedures and materials. Strategies include introductory motivational activities, orientation to the writing task, presentation of information about how to write, orientation to topic-specific data, student response through discussion, study, prewriting and feedback, and remediation and revision of prewriting completed.

Adult academic upgrading students. High school students who are generally older than mainstream students, have experienced substantial absence from school and are enrolled in programs leading to high school diploma certification.

Writing performance. Tested achievement in writing ability which is assessed in terms of the holistically derived quality and length of argumentative essays submitted.

Transactional writing. Writing to get things done: to inform people (telling them what they need or want to know or what we think they ought to know), to advise or persuade or instruct people. Thus the transactional is used, for example, to record facts, exchange opinions, explain and explore ideas, construct theories, transact business, conduct campaigns, or change public opinion (Britton, 1975).

Argumentative writing. A type of transactional writing done to persuade the reader about one's views on a given issue. Argumentation is characterized by high levels of accurate detail connected through established principles of logic.

Expository writing. A type of transactional writing which aims at informing the reader through recording, reporting, explaining, generalizing or theorizing.

Prewriting. Writing practice which is aimed at preparing the student to be tested for writing ability in various modes under specified conditions. For this study, prewriting was aimed at preparing students to write argumentative essays from memory in a specified time.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The major purpose of this chapter is to report previous research on the impact of writing instruction on transactional writing performance as measured in terms of writing variables relevant to the current investigation. Studies reviewed are those concerned with the effects of instruction in general and with specific foci of instruction and generic instructional activities most prominent in the present experimental condition.

For general studies, instruction was described either as a single entity or in terms of a number of foci and/or generic activities of instruction emphasized in the treatments applied. Writing performance results are primarily reported as effects of instruction as a single entity.

For the second category of studies, instruction was described in terms of specific foci where a single identifiable set of methods and materials dominated instruction and was analyzed for its impact alone on writing performance. Foci reviewed are the study of models of writing illustrating desired features of transactional writing and inquiry aimed at argumentation.

The third group of studies is concerned with the impacts of instructional activities which may be applied separately or in conjunction with any focus or foci of instruction. Reviewed in this chapter are investigations of the impacts on writing performance of prewriting and teacher feedback on prewriting. .

A summary of previous studies, a rationale for the selection of independent and dependent variables and a statement of the research problem will complete chapter II.

Studies on the Efficacy of Writing Instruction

General Studies

Although no studies of the impacts of writing instruction on the writing of academic upgrading adults are apparent, researchers during the past three decades have shown that college and high school students receiving writing instruction have consistently achieved higher scores on tests of writing proficiency than have students not receiving instruction (McQueen, Murray and Evans,1963; Woodward and Phillips,1967; Sanders and Littlefield,1975; Shaughnessey,1977; Bamberg,1978; Markwood,1981; Strugula,1983; Dunn,1984; Allen,1985; White and Polin,1986). Studies undertaken were of two types–those concerned with the effects of previous writing instruction in high school on later writing performance in college and those documenting the impacts of high school or college writing instruction on postinstructional writing. Subjects of these studies were both more proficient and less proficient writers. However, the following review is focussed on less proficient writers since the adult academic upgrading students of the current investigation were assumed to be generally less able writers than proficient mainstream high school and college writers of earlier research.

Effects of Instruction on Later Writing

Writing instruction was described in the following studies in terms of the duration of instruction, the amount of writing submitted for feedback and evaluation, prewriting and other activities undertaken during high school. Because of varying levels of specificity in these descriptions, conclusions about the long-term impacts of writing instruction on writing performance also vary in their specificity.

McQueen, Murray, and Evans (1963) reported better performance on college English Department placement tests and on three separate measures of first-year college English proficiency for students coming from high schools that required more writing instruction. The amount of high school instruction was estimated in terms of the number of words written for essays submitted during a typical week of instruction. Teacher feedback and help in the revision of these essays were delineated as part of instruction but not analyzed for their impacts. These researchers showed that a greater amount of teacher-assisted writing may result in better writing performance in later testing and coursework requiring substantial writing.

Woodward and Phillips (1967) compared the extents of high school writing instruction received by good and poor college writers in their study of a variety of factors affecting the writing of these students. A questionnaire was used to acquire data on high school instruction and other environmental and personal factors assumed to influence college writing performance. Poor college writers were students who had scored D or E (failing grades) in writing for the college semester previous to the study. High school writing instruction was measured in terms of the number of term papers of considerable length required in courses during the senior year of high school, the time spent by students per week in preparation for that writing, and the amount of voluntary writing completed .

Woodward and Phillips found that the poor writers received significantly lower scores than good writers on all measures of high school writing instruction. They also showed that poor college writers possessed many personal characteristics commonly assumed to affect writing negatively including low academic performance, disinterest in writing and personal unhappiness. However, these researchers concluded that inadequate development of writing skill can be attributed largely to environmental conditions such as lack of reading materials in the home and, most notably, a sparsity of writing experiences in high school. In this study, evidence was provided that writing improvement can be attributed not only to the amount of writing submitted for evaluation during previous coursework but also to the time spent in preparation for that writing.

Bamberg (1978) provided detailed findings for the roles of time and of specific activities of previous writing instruction on later expository writing performance. This researcher demonstrated strong relationships between each of the number of semesters of high school writing instruction, the writing skills emphasized during that instruction, the mode/purpose of prewriting and college expository writing performance. Bamberg selected groups of 122 and 156 first-year college students who had been identified, respectively, as more proficient writers and as less proficient writers on the basis of a college entrance essay examination. All students were asked to indicate on a questionnaire the number of semesters of high school writing instruction in nine skills of writing (word choice, idea support, thesis statement, conciseness, organization, spelling, mechanics, grammar, and revision) and to rank the three most frequent purposes of prewriting (personal writing, expository writing, summaries, creative writing, research papers, essay exams, or other). The amount of expository writing instruction and practice for each student was calculated by adding the student's score for the number of semesters spent on all nine skills of writing instruction to his/her score for expository prewriting (short expository essays, research papers, and essay exams).

Bamberg found that the more proficient college writers had received significantly more expository writing instruction and prewriting during high school than had the less proficient college writers. More specific results were obtained through an analysis of the effects of three emphases of expository writing instruction (content development, organization, and form) and of the effects of expository prewriting. T-test comparisons of less proficient and more proficient writers' scores on these four categories revealed that differences in the extent of instruction in expository content development and organization and in the extent of expository prewriting contributed most to expository instruction and practice total scores. Differences in instruction in correct written form, that is, grammar punctuation and spelling, contributed the least. Consistent with these results was the observation that the more proficient group had selected more high school semesters of English with more expository writing classes. Less proficient writers were more likely to select fewer semesters of English including more literature and creative writing classes.

Bamberg concluded that the amount of time allotted for writing instruction and prewriting during high school is an important factor in successful college expository writing. However, she also noted that the total amount of time of high school writing instruction was low for both groups, making her conclusion weaker. More important than time, she claimed, was the amount of instruction emphasizing content development, organization and prewriting in the expository mode. Bamberg suggested that the less proficient writers, in focussing on nonexpository, creative writing purposes during high school, may also have spent less time developing the expository writing skills needed for higher scores on the college entrance examination. In sum, this researcher showed that the amount of instruction and prewriting oriented to developing mode-specific writing skills, in this case, the expository mode, is important to later writing in the same mode.

Effects of Instruction on Postinstructional Writing

The following section contains a review of research conducted on the effects of instruction provided during specified periods of time and/or courses in high school and college settings on writing performance immediately following that instruction. One study was focussed on the importance of the experimental design and testing factors influencing writing outcomes, others on the effects of various instructional treatments on mainstream students, and a third type of study was concerned with less proficient writers specifically.

Sanders and Littlefield (1977) found not only that the duration and mode specificity of writing instruction may significantly affect writing performance immediately following that instruction, but also that registering these effects at all may depend on experimental treatment and testing conditions. They began with the notion that researchers who had observed nonsignificant impacts for instruction on writing may simply have failed to register progress made as a result of that instruction. They explained this notion by suggesting that experimental testing of instruction may (a) be a particularly poor measure of the verbal fluency of weaker writers who need more time to write, (b) limit the subjects' motivation when they are aware that no credit and possibly no response may be received for their efforts, and (c) in stipulating a particular writing mode for testing, fail to register writing abilities acquired by the subjects from previous instruction in other modes.

To test these assumptions, Sanders and Littlefield studied two classes comprised of fifty first-year college students. All students were required to write both an impromptu essay on one of two topics randomly assigned for each class and a researched essay on a topic of each student's own choosing. For the impromptu essay, students writing on the first topic for the pretest wrote on the second topic for the posttest. For the researched topic, students wrote on two different topics, one for pretesting and the other for posttesting. For pretesting, students in one of the classes wrote rough drafts, received teacher feedback and prepared final drafts for the impromptu topics during two, fifty -minute class periods. The same students then followed a similar procedure for personally selected topics, but were allowed one week to collect a specified amount of information on their topics prior to writing. This information was available to students during testing. Students were also given extra time to write final drafts in the presence of their teacher if they desired it. These pretesting procedures were also followed for the second class, which wrote on the researched essay first and the impromptu essay next. After five subsequent weeks of classroom instruction, the entire procedure was repeated for posttesting. Students were asked to write with the purpose of persuasion in mind for all four essays.

Results were that pretest to posttest gains in general impression as measured on both expository and persuasive writing scales were significant for the researched essay group. No significant differences were observed for the impromptu essays using either scale. It had been hypothesized that students who were to write researched essays on topics of their own choosing following instruction aimed specifically at persuasion would improve writing on a persuasive scale but not on a general expository scale. Greater gains for the researched-topic group on both scales were attributed to experimental conditions for writing which more closely approximated writing instructional activities and procedures of their normal classroom than did experimental conditions for the impromptu group.

Sanders and Littlefield concluded that impromptu essay testing places artificial constraints on the use of writing skills already learned and, as such, is not a valid method for evaluating the results of composition instruction. They maintained, conversely, that the experimental conditions for the researched essay allowed writers to demonstrate more effectively the skills they had already learned during previous classroom instruction. Some implications for the teaching and testing of persuasive writing are that these activities will require opportunity for students to select their own topics, adequate time to develop and organize content, and access to this content and adequate time to present it during testing. Impromptu testing involving assigned topics and rigid scheduling may not provide these conditions and so may not allow students to demonstrate their actual writing skill in a given mode. These implications apply especially to less proficient writers.

A number of investigators have studied less proficient college and high school students in revealing the positive influence of writing instruction on postinstructional writing performance. It was shown in two of these studies that less proficient writers may actually benefit more from instruction than more proficient writers.

Shaughnessey (1977) observed that "underprepared" first-year college students placed in basic writing classes almost all showed modest improvement in writing after one semester of low-intensity instruction. Instruction was comprised of four classroom hours per week and one-to-one conference time. The focus was on the basic skills of punctuation, grammar, spelling and vocabulary as well as on helping students to develop a perception of the desirable rhetorical structures of the writing to be completed. Writing tasks consisted of four essays assigned and evaluated during the semester. Of 50 students, 4 showed no improvement, 15 showed slight or some improvement, 21 demonstrated significant overall improvement, and 7 produced marked improvement in coherence, control over sentence structure, focus, development, and organization. Shaughnessey suggested that these results support continued and improved instruction for remedial college writers since a variety of writing features were improved significantly for a substantial percentage of these writers. Especially relevant to the present study were improvements in content development and organization.

The particular benefits of instruction for less proficient college writers were also noted by Strugala (1983) who compared pre- to posttest gains in the writing performances of 52 college remedial writing students and 30 first-year college composition students enrolled in sixteen-week writing courses at a four-year college. Holistic and analytic measures were used to provide assessments of strong, average, and weak quality writing. Significant pretest to posttest gains in expository writing and nonsignificant pretest to posttest gains in personal writing were found for the remedial writing students. Nonsignificant gains for both expository and personal writing were observed for the composition students. One implication of this study is that less able writers required to do expository writing may, in particular, benefit from writing instruction. Strugala suggested that instruction integrating language experiences in writing, reading, speaking, and listening with the development of students' self-esteem will be an effective means of acquiring this benefit.

White and Polin (1986) provided interesting explanations for their observation that writing instruction had a greater impact on the writing of less proficient college writers than it did on more proficient college writers in 19 California State University college campuses. They found pre- to posttest gains for lower division (remedial) students on a measure of expository content development and focus (DF) that were significantly greater than gains achieved by upper division (advanced) students. As well, those remedial students who had received instruction focussed on the content of writing achieved significantly greater pretest to posttest gains in DF scores and holistic scores (HS) than those remedial students who had received instruction emphasizing discrete sentence and paragraph skills, that is, mechanics, spelling, usage, and sentence structure. The DF scale measured content development in terms of the number of levels of general and specific information and the logical connection of this information. The HS scale measured completeness, clarity, organization, originality and freedom from errors in mechanics, word usage and sentence structure.

White and Polin attributed both of these findings to instruction which defied the traditional concentration on correctness for weaker students . Correctness referred in this study to freedom from errors in grammar, punctuation, diction, and other features which may interfere with the reader's understanding. In explaining the advantage of content-oriented instruction for remedial writers, White and Polin pointed out that even the weakest writers showed a "surprising ability to use rhetorical markers, shift levels of abstraction and focus arguments" (p. 194) where instruction specifically in these areas was previously provided.

Another finding of this study was that more proficient writers who had received writing instruction made greater gains in HS than more proficient writers who had received no writing instruction. Since holistic scores were highly correlated with correctness scores, White and Polin (1986) maintained that the observed benefit of instruction was largely a function of the essay raters' high levels of attention to correctness. Based on this contention, the proficiency of remedial students in DF, and their typically low levels of correctness, it is reasonable to suggest that remedial students may have also been assessed greater HS gains in comparison with more proficient students had the HS assessment been based more on facility in content development than on correctness. In any case, White and Polin clearly showed that when less proficient college students are given the opportunity to apply writing skills most readily available to them, in this case, skills pertaining to the development of content, these students will be more successful in their writing.

The efficacy of writing instruction on the postinstructional writing of less proficient writers has also been noted at the high school level. Dunn (1984) examined the effects of a comprehensive writing program for below average and slightly below average seniors. A multimedia approach was used to instruct 50 students for six weeks in paragraph development emphasizing organization, content and mechanics followed by six weeks of instruction focussed on outlining and organizing two five-paragraph essays. All writing was related to the curriculum of a mass media course. Dunn found significant pretest to posttest differences in the quality of writing. The fact that raw scores were, on average, five times greater than expected prompted Dunn to conclude that weaker writers may especially benefit from writing instruction. She suggested that writing instruction dealing with the content of other courses, multisensory in appeal, and easily understood may work as a "springboard" for teaching basic sentence and paragraph skills needed by these writers to improve their writing quality. This suggestion concurs with the implication of White and Polin's (1986) research that instruction should be focussed on writing resources and skills most accessible to students, in this case, content from other coursework.

Other researchers of the effects of specified periods or courses of instruction on postinstructional writing have tested the effects on writing of varying instructional designs in their studies of nonremedial students. Results of these tests provide information about the effects of assigned writing tasks and prewriting on the quality and length of postinstructional writing.

Markwood (1981) compared the pre-and posttest fall semester writing of 43 first-year college students who had received one semester of writing instruction with the pre- to posttest writing of 16 first-year college students who had received no writing instruction. Gains on a holistic quality score for the instructed group were significantly greater than gains for the noninstructed group. No significant differences were found for a measure of essay length (total words). It was also noted that there were large variations in the extent of gains in quality between groups with different instructors. Markwood provided evidence that writing instruction may improve quality on assigned topic writing performance more than will no instruction but that the teacher may affect that outcome.

Allen (1985) found a relationship between writing instruction and the amount of postinstructional writing completed. Twenty-six Grade 11 students with diverse writing abilities were pretested for their proficiency on a persuasive writing task involving a letter to a newspaper editor. Subsequent Instruction consisted of traditional as well as original activities during one hour per week for 10 weeks. Students were assisted in writing a third person perspective on a case study, an autobiography, a job application letter, a conclusion to an unfinished story, a first person account of a newspaper article, an explanation of a short story, a personal journal, and writings based on language experience sessions. The posttest consisted of a writing task similar to the pretest but on a different topic. A significantly greater quantity of writing was observed in posttests than in pretests. In spite of these results, Allen concluded that ten hours of instruction is "insufficient for real intervention and for realistic appraisal of progress" (p.4). However, she demonstrated that instruction involving substantial prewriting in a variety of modes may increase the amount of writing completed by students.

In sum, substantial support has been provided by researchers for the view that writing instruction can improve writing quality, length, content development, and organization significantly. Such improvements have been attributed to a number of general characteristics of this instruction. These include more time for instruction, opportunity to research the writing topic, attention to content and organization rather than surface features of writing, more extensive prewriting in the mode to be tested, adequate feedback and assistance with revision of this prewriting, and consistency between instructional and testing conditions. It may be that less proficient writers particularly benefit from instruction having these characteristics.

While some insight into the nature of effective writing instruction was provided in terms of a number of generic features, little was revealed about the nature and impact of these features as separate entities. The remainder of this review of literature contains such a discussion in a summary of research on those features most relevant to the current investigation. These include two specific foci of instruction, prewriting and feedback.

Studies of Specific Foci of Instruction

In his comprehensive review of literature on writing instruction research, Hillocks (1986) defined foci of instruction as "types of content or activities that teachers of composition expect to have a salutary effect on writing" (p.150). A given study was classified as having specific focus of instruction if it consisted primarily of certain methods, materials and activities in the experimental treatment but not in the control treatment. Foci identified by Hillocks include topic framing, the study of models of writing, inquiry, the study of grammar and mechanics, sentence combining and construction, the use of sets of writing criteria or scales, various audio, visual and tactile stimuli, free writing, free association, memory search, and peer discussion.

Hillocks distinguished foci of instruction from modes of instruction which describe more general aspects of instructional design and strategy. Mode was defined by the role of the teacher but, as well, according to the specificity and clarity of objectives and learning tasks and the type and sequence of activities. For example, a "presentational" mode was characterized by teacher-led discussion, specific objectives, models, imitation and teacher feedback, while the "natural process" mode was characterized by general objectives, free writing, and feedback from peers. Thus, a particular mode might be characterized by one or more foci of instruction as well.

The following review includes a summary of studies of foci of instruction considered most relevant to the instruction, students, and, where possible, dependent variables of the present investigation, that is, writing quality and length. Studies reviewed were concerned with the effects of instruction employing models of writing and inquiry. Although elements of other foci were employed in the present study, activities used in studies of models and inquiry most closely approximate the major activities of the current study.

Study of Models of Writing

Hillocks (1986) pointed out that the classroom study of models of writing is one way to teach the criteria of good writing of a given mode/purpose of writing. Other ways of teaching these criteria include the use of scales or sets of criteria to guide writing, teacher feedback about what is good and what to avoid, and guided revision using the comments of teachers or peers. In the study of models, students learn the criteria of a given writing form and later apply them to their writing while for feedback and revision, these criteria are learned primarily following writing. During instruction focussed on model pieces of writing, students may simply be exposed to good writing in a given mode, or they may be involved in careful analysis and identification of specific qualities or features of that mode. In both cases, they will be expected to integrate these characteristics into their own writing. To write a good argumentative essay, for example, students must learn to recognize general statements of opinion supported by adequate specific details in model arguments and then transfer this feature to their writing.

Hillocks isolated three categories of model use studies including (a) general exposure studies in which students either read or were read samples of "good" writing, (b) studies in which models were used centrally in prewriting activities, and (c) studies where models were used incidentally in conjunction with other foci, methods, techniques or approaches to writing instruction. To maintain consistency with the present study, only central use studies are reviewed. The majority were conducted in high school and college settings, although some studies for younger students will also be cited. No studies for adult academic upgrading students were located.

Most studies reported here emphasized the teaching of rhetorical, structural or other qualitative features of expository writing. Comparisons of the impact of model study with the effects of treatments lacking model study or with treatments using other foci of instruction are included.

Andreach (1976) found significant gains in writing for 10th-grade high school students who were taught to imitate organizational features illustrated in models of writing. This researcher compared the effects of model study and conventional grammar-based instruction on expository writing organization. He attributed the greater pretest to posttest gains made by the model imitation group to the fact that both the experimental treatment and the rating scale were concerned with the single component of expository organization. Andreach's results are consistent with Bamberg's (1978) findings showing that instruction focussed on the organization of expository writing may be more effective than instruction emphasizing surface features of writing. As well, his explanation regarding single features of writing is supported by research on feedback suggesting that feedback focussed on single aspects of writing is more effective than feedback spread over a number of features (Beach, 1979).

Wood (1977) also used models illustrating relatively few features in providing evidence for the effectiveness of model study in improving the quality of a number of modes of writing. She trained 10th-, 11th- and 12th-grade teachers to instruct students for six weeks using prepared model study materials. A control group was instructed using a traditional textbook grammar-oriented program. Wood found significant differences between these two groups on pretest to posttest writing quality scores for descriptive, narrative and expository writing. Thus, she provided strong evidence for the efficacy of model study in teaching mode-specific writing by demonstrating the effectiveness for this focus for three distinct writing modes. The matching of writing assessment criteria to the emphases of instruction may have been an important factor in these results if other researchers are correct (Sanders and Littlefield, 1977; Beach, 1979; Land, 1984). In general, they maintained that essay testing conditions must approximate instructional conditions to accurately register writing improvement.

Perry (1980) was one of a number of researchers who hypothesized that specialized and systematic procedures would be needed for effective model study. He tested first-year community college students for their abilities to apply specified structural features learned during the study of models to their own writing. Model study consisted of four weeks of instruction in specialized reading strategies designed to help students to identify the structural features illustrated in the models presented. Each week of reading instruction was followed by one week of instruction in applying to writing the structural features learned during reading of the models. On a pre- to posttest analysis of holistically derived quality scores, Perry found no significant differences between the group receiving this instruction and the control group not receiving it. Perry suggested that achieving the desired improvement in writing skill required more time than was allotted by instruction. He suggested that further research is needed on reading/writing relationships, the implication being that not enough is known about these relationships to ensure effective transfer to writing of the knowledge acquired from model study.

More recent researchers have applied specialized reading strategies more successfully to the study of models. Austin (1983) found significant gains at the .01 level in pretest to posttest scores for recognition of rhetorical techniques and for compositions written following instruction of first-year college students in the recognition of these techniques. A control group which had not received this instruction also produced significant gains at the .05 level in pretest to posttest composition scores but showed no significant gains for technique recognition. The experimental group of 25 college students had received instruction for several weeks involving written exercises and discussion requiring analysis of composition techniques used in model essays. The control group read these models but did not analyze them. Austin concluded that training in the recognition of effective rhetorical techniques through the analysis of models can assist students to write more mature essays than can instructing students to read the models without analysis. Adequate discussion of the features.illustrated in the models and prewriting to practice using these features were shown to be essential aspects of effective model analysis.

Davis (1988) provided further evidence that the study of models may be particularly effective in improving the organization of writing in finding significant pretest to posttest gains in coherence. These gains were found following traditional form-centered instruction involving the teaching of the organizational schemata of specific modes of writing through models. A process-centered, conference-based method of instruction using no model study produced no such gains in either coherence, quality, or length. Davis studied two groups (one for each of the two teaching methods) comprised of a total of 97 first-year college students. For the process-centered group, the students were treated as generators of writing forms while for the traditional method, the teacher was the presenter of knowledge of those forms. Forms were the organizational schemata of specific modes writing, that is, structural frameworks shown to exist in every instance of a given mode.

Davis concluded that the study of mode-specific models guides students to more coherent writing since they learn the organizational schemata pertinent to the mode of writing being studied. These schemata may be more effectively learned through traditional instruction in which the teacher identifies the structures than through student-centered instruction where structures are expected to be acquired by writing and discussion. Davis's findings also support the study of models for improving quality since coherence has been shown to correlate strongly with holistic quality scores in other studies of writing (White and Polin, 1986).

Knudson (1988) also provided convincing evidence for the value of model study to improved transactional writing by comparing the impact of this focus with that of a number of other foci. She instructed 356 high school students in either persuasive or informational writing through (a) the presentation of model pieces of good writing in these modes, focussed on the discourse structures shown in the models, (b) the use of scales, questions, and criteria regarding good writing in these modes, focussed on the students' writing processes as they engaged in all phases of composing, (c) the presentation of both model pieces of writing and scales, questions and criteria, focussed on both discourse structures and writing process, and (d) free writing, where students were provided with pictures and asked to write about the pictures.

Knudson found that for both informational and persuasive writing collected immediately following treatment and again two weeks later, the most effective instructional strategy was the presentation of model pieces of writing alone. One implication given was that an emphasis on the discourse structures of good informational and persuasive writing through model study may result in better organized writing than will teaching techniques focussed on the processes of such writing. Knudson suggested, however, that successful utilization of models of writing will involve instruction in recognizing the discourse structures of these modes of writing, will allow students to learn discourse structures orally from the models before applying them to writing, and will encourage frequent prewriting. Thus she concurred with Austin (1983) and Davis (1988) regarding the need for systematic analysis of models through discussion and prewriting while adding that this prewriting should be frequent.

In sum, researchers of the impact of the study of model pieces of writing on writing performance have shown that significant effects on the quality of a number of modes of writing can be achieved most readily where mode-specific models are systematically read, discussed, and analyzed in regard to their features. Frequent and substantial writing in conjunction with these activities have also been recommended. However, factors such as the time of instruction, the reading abilities of students and the nature of reading, discussion analysis and writing activities may seriously affect intended writing outcomes.

Greater and more consistent gains in writing have been observed for instructional activities including more student interaction in learning mode-specific features. The nature of these activities and explanations of their effectiveness are reviewed in the following section on the focus of instruction referred to as inquiry.

Inquiry

Hillocks (1986) defined inquiry as instruction which "presents students with sets of data (or requires them to find data) and then initiates activities designed to help students develop skills or strategies for dealing with the data in order to write something about it" (p.211). For example, activities may be initiated which require students to focus on the strategies of formulating generalizations, observing and reporting significant details, or generating criteria for contrasting similar phenomena. Instruction in inquiry differs from instruction presenting models of writing since models would illustrate already-formed generalizations, significant details, and criteria for comparing phenomena.

Instruction emphasizing inquiry typically tries to help students to discover strategies which could be used to develop and organize that data for a specific mode of writing. For example, students might be presented with a problem situation requiring them to develop a policy decision, for instance, regarding what action to take on a community pollution problem. Students would then work with sets of data relevant to this problem and, in the process, learn strategies which are important to the form(s) of writing most relevant to solving the problem. In this case, strategies needed for argumentative writing such as supporting general opinions with specific facts and predicting opposing arguments might be learned from working with relevant data.

Studies of inquiry have been directed towards analytic, definitional, descriptive and argumentative writing. The following review reports only those concerned with argumentative writing as this mode was the concern of the present study. Researchers of inquiry and argumentation have used a number of distinct techniques to teach argumentative writing strategies, all requiring extensive discussion, student interaction and prewriting. While very few studies are available for argumentation, results have been generally positive.

Troyka (1973) conducted an earlier but major investigation of inquiry and argumentation over one semester of study of 25 experimental and 25 control classes of remedial writers in a two-year college program. She compared the effects of an inquiry technique (simulation-gaming) involving extensive student interaction to solve a problem with the effects of instruction focussing on models of argumentative writing. The inquiry (experimental) treatment was initiated by providing students with information on the setting and background of situation-specific pollution, crime, and drug abuse problems. For each of these problems, prewriting was assigned which required all students to use one of a number of basic writing strategies relevant to argumentation. Students either provided facts and reasons, described incidents, or compared and contrasted. Armed with information needed to present the views of a specific societal group, students worked in small groups to persuade students representing other societal groups of the legitimacy of their group's solution to the problem. Thus, students were expected to learn specific writing strategies important to argumentation by being placed in writing and speaking contexts requiring them to use and develop those strategies. The control groups, by contrast, were instructed by means of traditional lecture, notetaking and reading activities aimed at learning strategies and structures illustrated in models of argumentative writing.

Troyka found that the inquiry group achieved significantly greater pretest to posttest gains in holistically derived writing quality than did the control group. As well, it was found that students who did more writing during the inquiry treatment produced significantly better posttest essays. One explanation provided for these results was that the inquiry treatment had motivational features which were not included in the traditional treatment and that these features were of particular value to the remedial students. The focus for each problem situation on single, basic writing strategies and extensive small group verbal interaction were suggested by Troyka to minimize the threat of failure and to motivate learning of strategies of argumentation. This learning was more effective than the learning achieved by the study of models since it transferred more effectively to writing.

Troyka provided evidence that the argumentative writing of less proficient students will be improved significantly more by the inquiry technique of simulation-gaming than it will be by model study. It appears that a greater amount of student interaction and writing and the resulting higher motivation of students are the features of this technique most important to improving writing quality. Substantial instructional time and the use of role plays may also be important.

Pisano (1980) also suggested that opportunities for discussion and writing were the major factors in the improvement of argumentative writing through inquiry. Pisano used a technique aimed at enhancing the critical thinking skills of eleventh and twelfth graders through oral questioning prior to and following writing exercises in both personal and transactional modes. A control group did not receive this instruction. Pisano found no significant differences between groups in pre- to posttest gains on five measures of critical thinking. However, gains on a holistic measure of writing quality were significantly higher for the experimental group. As well, significant differences were found in the quantity of writing which favored the experimental group.

Pisano attributed his findings to teacher attitudes and the activities surrounding teachers' questioning of students. Control group students who had received instruction from teachers displaying a "closed-restrictive" attitude to students' writing tended to produce perfunctory writing lacking any personal style or commitment to the writing process. Pisano suggested that experimental students' writing displayed these latter qualities because of their contact with "open-receptive" instructors and the substantial discussion and writing (both personal and transactional) done in conjunction with questioning. Findings of this study are evidence of the value of topic-specific questioning in conjunction with substantial discussion and prewriting in increasing the amount and quality of argumentative writing.

While his results were not as conclusive, McCleary (1979) presented further evidence for the effectiveness of inquiry on argumentative writing by applying an inquiry technique concerned with improving logic. He showed that the teaching of formal deductive logic was associated with significant gains on a single-impression writing scale measuring the use of argumentative strategies, but that these gains were not significantly greater than those of a control group receiving no such instruction. The consideration of opposing arguments accounted for a significant portion of the differences that were found.

Fifteen classes of first-year community college students were divided into five groups. Four of these groups received instruction in logic and one served as the control group during 10 hours of instruction over one month. Students in all groups were provided with problem situations describing ethical dilemmas which were to be resolved through logical written arguments. During instructional time, all students were required to analyze the problem situations in terms of strategies basic to ethical arguments including identification of obligations, consequences of actions, and conflicts among these. They were then guided in generating theses, selecting supporting information, predicting opposing arguments, and finally, in applying all these strategies to writing arguments.

McLeary attributed the lack of effectiveness of teaching logic to weaknesses in his experimental design. However, the large gains in writing made by both experimental and control groups were not explained. Since both groups were involved with learning strategies specific to the writing task, it is reasonable to suggest that both groups improved their writing because of these aspects of inquiry. While instruction in logic may have had little effect on writing scores, more evidence was provided in this study suggesting that it is the more extensive writing and discussion common to inquiry techniques which account for the efficacy of this instructional focus.

In sum, researchers who have explored the impacts of inquiry on argumentative writing have shown that guided practice in the use of basic writing strategies and direct instruction in logic or critical thinking may help students to argue more effectively in writing. Such instruction allows students to learn strategies of argumentation by discovering them through discussion and writing activities. Improved argumentation has been suggested by these researchers to be more a result of these activities than it is of improvements in the use of basic writing strategies, logic, or critical thinking.

Studies of Generic Instructional Activities

Prewriting

Hyslop (1983) pointed out that many in the field of English education today believe that students best learn to write by writing. Although some researchers have shown this to be a false assumption, a substantial number have shown that prewriting can improve later writing, depending on the frequency, extent and nature of that prewriting. Such results have been found mostly in mainstream junior high school, high school and college contexts. However, no studies on the effects of prewriting on the writing of adult academic upgrading students have been located. While prewriting has been cited as important both to inquiry and model study, its specific nature has not been described in studies of these foci. A review of research on prewriting which provides such descriptions is provided in this section

Prewriting frequency. The effects of prewriting have been demonstrated by a number of investigators who compared the impacts of frequent, infrequent and no prewriting on postinstructional writing. These investigators have compared the influences of these frequencies of prewriting on students' integration into their writing of content from literature written about and of specified features of expository writing.

Hyslop (1983) investigated the impact of prewriting frequency on expository writing improvement by comparing the effects of two frequencies of prewriting about literature studied. Forty eleventh graders studied literature and wrote weekly about this literature for an initial twelve-week period. During a subsequent twelve-week period, these students also studied literature but wrote daily about that literature. All students wrote pretest and posttest essays for each of the two treatments. Gains in essay quality for the daily prewriting treatment were significantly greater than gains in quality observed for the weekly prewriting treatment. Hyslop concluded that writing daily may be a more effective method of improving writing quality than writing weekly. The use of a Primary Trait Scoring Guide to assess quality suggests that content was a major criteria in this assessment. Therefore, Hyslop also showed that more frequent prewriting about literature on the topic to be written about is likely to improve integration of content from that literature into writing. This contention is consistent with findings which link more extensive writing with improved content learning (Collins, 1981; Newell, 1987; Langer, 1986b).

Perry (1985) studied the effects of prewriting frequency on the integration into writing of specified traits of expository writing studied in class. She examined the effects on ninth graders' holistically derived writing quality scores of a twelve-week writing program which included daily practice in informative writing. One hundred and eighteen students spent the first 10 to 15 minutes of a daily writing class during a two-week period doing writing exercises designed to practice identifiable traits of informative writing. During the third week, students completed a writing assignment developed according to writing process guidelines which required them to apply what they had learned about the traits of informative writing. This cycle was repeated four times. The experimental group completing daily prewriting showed significant pretest to posttest gains in holistic quality composition scores ($p < .001$). The control group which completed no prewriting produced no significant pretest to posttest gains.

Perry concluded that a program of daily exercises developed to practice the elements of informative writing separately followed by a process-based writing assignment designed to reemphasize and synthesize those elements will effect improved writing performance. This researcher characterized prewriting which may be most effective in the learning of mode-specific features as frequent (daily) and extensive (involving prewriting for all phases of the writing process).

More frequent prewriting has not always been associated with improved writing performance. For example, Chapman (1985) found no significant correlation between the frequency of prewriting done in various modes and the writing achievement of 4th-, 8th- and 11th- grade students. Available literature on this study included no explanation for these results. However, the facts that frequency data were based on previous coursework and reported by students suggest that these data were derived from a lengthy period of instruction. Assuming that this is correct, it can be suggested that frequent prewriting, even over a long period of time, may have little effect on later writing.

Amount and type of prewriting. Other investigators of the efficacy of prewriting have compared the impacts of various types and amounts of prewriting on expository writing performance. Prewriting has been distinguished as guided or nonguided and extended or restricted. Generally, guided and extended prewriting assignments required a greater number of words to be written as well as more inferencing and elaboration than did nonguided or restricted prewriting assignments. While treatments compared were similar in these respects, varying explanations of why writing quality improvement was associated with more words written during prewriting were offered.

Reilly (1986) studied the effects of guided prewriting compared to nonguided prewriting on the quality of 52 first-year college students' written essay interpretations of two short stories. The guided (experimental) group was required to make inferences about story characters, settings and the relationships between characters and setting. The nonguided (control) group answered factual information questions based on the same literary concepts.

Results were that the guided writing group produced significantly better interpretive essays than the nonguided group as measured by pre- to posttest differences in total quality for both stories combined. Total quality was assessed using six four-point scales measuring the amount and specificity of support for interpretations, understanding of the stories' character/setting relationships, degree of abstraction, fluency (a measure of essay length), and overall quality. The experimental treatment was significant for only one of the two stories. Reilly explained this finding by noting that this story presented less explicit information about the literary concepts to be written about than did the second story. As a result, she maintained, students did more prewriting to interpret the story in terms of these concepts and learned more about character/setting relationships than they did for the other story.

Reilly concluded that students writing interpretive essays may benefit from prewriting activities inviting inferences since inferencing involves more initial analysis and organization of ideas than does answering factual information questions. The resulting "deeper interpretations" of reading texts may subsequently be transferred to essay writing. Reilly offered no clear explanation of how this transfer to essay writing may have occurred. However, research showing more extensive prewriting (involving more words written) about given text to be associated with a more effective learning from that text (Langer, 1986b; Newell, 1987) supports her contention about "deeper interpretations" derived from prewriting.

Marshall (1987) provided a detailed explanation of how more extensive prewriting improves writing performance. He compared the impacts of assignments inviting extended prewriting and those inviting restricted prewriting on the writing performance of 80 high school English students. The extended writing condition required students either to (a) interpret in an extended fashion, make inferences, and draw conclusions about stories by using only text evidence in writing formal argumentative essays, or (b) explain and elaborate their responses to these stories by drawing on their own values and experiences. The restricted condition required the students to describe, interpret, and generalize in response to short answer questions about the stories.

Marshall found that both forms of extended prewriting resulted in pre- to posttest gains in writing quality which were significantly greater than those for the restricted condition. Essays were scored higher if they moved beyond a mere retelling of the story to interpretation including extensive and specific support organized in a deductive manner. Marshall attributed the superiority of the extended prewriting to a greater opportunity to elaborate while analyzing the stories than was offered by the restricted writing condition. He explained that the short answer format questions of the restricted writing condition forced students to shift rapidly from one area of content or mode of writing to the other. This shifting of focus may have interfered with the development of a coherent sense of the stories' overall meanings. Marshall maintained that this elaboration was the key element in the creation of lasting mental representations of story meanings which would be crucial to more extensive, organized and specific later writing about the stories. In sum, Marshall provided evidence that more extensive writing allows a greater opportunity to interpret content specific to a given writing topic. This interpretation may be a key factor in the ability to produce detailed and deductively organized written expositions of that topic.

The effects on writing performance of extensive prewriting about specified literature have not all been positive. Louque (1983) tested Grade 7 students for their abilities to write in descriptive and expository modes following guided prewriting done in conjunction with newspaper reading. She found no significant pretest to posttest differences on a holistic measure of writing quality between students receiving this treatment and those not receiving it . However, Louque attributed variance in quality within groups to reading attitude and reading ability. This explanation is consistent with Reilly's (1986) contention that "If the interpretive task is simply too difficult ... then the prewriting will have no benefits" (p.11). Since the ability to interpret a given text is largely based on understanding of the content of that text, it is reasonable to say that the representation of this content in writing will also be affected by reading proficiency. Thus, Louque also demonstrated that prewriting may be ineffective in assisting in content development if the reading ability required to understand that content is inadequate.

Researchers of the effects of prewriting have shown the frequency, extent, and nature of prewriting to be associated with the improved expository writing performance of high school and college students. It appears that more frequent prewriting about specified literature is effective in improving the quality of later writing based about that literature. As well, more frequent prewriting may assist in the integration of mode-specific writing features and may be enhanced by more extensive prewriting elicited through instruction in the process of writing. The quality of expository writing may also be improved by more extensive prewriting. Greater elaboration done while writing more words allows writers to form mental representations of a text's meaning which are better developed and organized, resulting in higher quality writing. Teacher feedback on prewriting, however, may play a major role in this phenomena. The next section contains a review of literature regarding this point.

Feedback on Prewriting

Hillocks (1986) concluded from an extensive review of literature on teacher feedback (or comment) on writing from 1960 to 1980 that "the results of these studies strongly suggest that teacher comment has little or no impact on student writing" (p. 165). He noted, however, that for most of these investigations, feedback was diffuse, that is, directed at a variety of writing criteria, and that there was a general lack of the prewriting and revision in conjunction with this feedback. Researchers in the 1980s have observed more positive results from comments aimed at fewer features of writing and requiring more prewriting and revision. While a number of such studies have been identified for high school and college settings, none have been located.for adult academic upgrading contexts

A variety of types of feedback have been compared to ascertain their influences on writing. Feedback from teachers or peers; written or oral feedback provided through various media; feedback which was intensive, moderate or not present; frequent, infrequent, or undifferentiated feedback; and, negative or positive feedback are some of most prominent. Included in the following section are comparisons of the impacts on writing of (a) teacher feedback, student self-evaluation and no feedback; (b) content, form, and no feedback; (c) explicit feedback, implicit feedback and no feedback; and (d) teacher feedback and peer feedback. As well, a study of the effects of positive feedback is reported. Some attention is also given to the impacts of this feedback on writing processes relevant to improving writing quality.

Teacher feedback and no feedback. A number of researchers have compared the effects of different types of teacher feedback and no feedback on several aspects of essay writing. Generally, they showed that comments directed at content development tended to be the most effective means of encouraging desired revisions and/or improving the quality of writing. However, one investigator insisted that teacher feedback is ineffective both for revising and improving the quality of writing.

Beach (1979) conducted a groundwork study on the impact of teacher feedback on expository writing revision and improvement. Beach directed 103 Grade 11 and Grade 12 students to revise their first drafts either after receiving teacher feedback (TE), after using a form to evaluate their own writing (SE), or after no intervening feedback, where students made revisions that they felt were necessary (NE). TE and SE feedback consisted of quality ratings on five-point scales for each of sentences, language, flavor, focus, support, overall quality and need-for-change. The effects of this feedback on writing processes, writing quality (rated by the seven TE and SE feedback criteria) and on writing fluency (number of words per essay) were assessed by comparisons of first and final drafts of three writing assignments. Beach found that the TE treatment resulted in significantly more revisions on first drafts, higher fluency ratings on final drafts and higher quality scores on the dimension of support in comparison to SE and NE treatments. No differences were found for the other dimensions of writing quality .

Beach attributed his finding on support to the teacher's provision of written feedback which was more extensive, focussed, and specific for support than for the other dimensions of quality. He suggested that students assessing support through self-evaluation (SE) may have been less able to recognize the need for improvement on this dimension than they were through an external perspective (TE). Students receiving no feedback may simply have assumed that their intended meaning was communicated, and therefore they made fewer needed revisions. Beach provided evidence that written teacher feedback is an effective means of improving content development by demonstrating its efficacy in improving support. He also explained that teacher feedback is likely to result in longer final drafts because more revisions involving the addition of a greater number of words are made in response to this type of feedback.

Land (1984) compared the effects of content cues, form cues and no teacher feedback on the revision of first drafts and on the holistic quality of final drafts of the expository writing of students varying in age and writing ability. He studied 15 higher and 15 lower ability writers selected from one Grade 7 class and one Grade 11 class. These cues directed the students to (a) revise first drafts as desired, (b) attend to content by adding and/or deleting information, or (c) attend to form (spelling, grammar, punctuation, word choice, and organization). Results were that (a) students cued to make content revisions made significantly more of these revisions at both grade levels than students receiving either of the other cues, (b) essays written by Grade 11 students cued to make content revisions were significantly higher in quality than were essays written by Grade 7 students cued to make content revisions, and (c) correlations between content cues and essay quality were stronger at the 11th-grade level.

The finding that content cues resulted in the most revisions is consistent with Beach's (1979) observations. Both of these researchers made it clear that cues directed at content result in more content revisions than do cues directed at other aspects of writing. As such, the amount of desired revision appears to depend on the specificity of matching between the revision cue and the type of revision expected. Land's findings that Grade 11 students improved their writing quality through content cues better than did Grade 7 students led him to conclude that as writers mature, they make neither more nor different types of revisions but instead, employ more effectively the revision strategies they have used over time. Apparently, content feedback may not only be more effective than form or no feedback; it also utilized better by more experienced writers.

In her study of first-year college students, Ziv (1984) added to previous findings on the effects of feedback on the writing processes and products of less proficient writers. Four students experiencing problems of organization, logical development and focus on first drafts of a pretest essay were selected. During one semester of instruction, these students wrote seven other essays in which they received oral feedback from their peers on first drafts, written comments from their instructor on second drafts and a composite final grade from the teacher for overall quality on five final drafts. Data on how students reacted to teacher comments written on their second drafts were obtained by tape recordings. Feedback categories were (a) explicit cues where the teacher indicated exact errors and possible revisions, (b) implicit cues where the teacher called attention to the general problem and suggested alternatives, and (c) teacher corrections, reorganization, and addition or deletion of sentences, phrases and words. Each of these feedback types was also coded in terms of macrolevel comments (referring to conceptual and structural aspects of writing) and microlevel comments (referring to lexical and sentential aspects).

Analysis of final drafts on the macrolevel revealed that explicit cues helped the research subjects to reorganize, strengthen, and make major conceptual changes to their second drafts while implicit cues helped with clarification of ideas. On the microlevel, explicit cues encouraged revision of sentences and word choices without an understanding of why revisions were made. Improvement in overall quality from first to final drafts was not specified in literature available for this study. However, Ziv showed that explicit cues dealing with content and organization tend to produce more revisions of these aspects of writing than do implicit cues. As well, this researcher's suggestion that explicit macrolevel cues are particularly of value to inexperienced writers is consistent with White and Polin's (1986) finding that less proficient students of writing benefited particularly from instructional attention to content development.

The notion that less proficient writers may benefit especially from teacher feedback focussed on macrolevel features of writing has also found support in research on positive teacher feedback. Goodman (1975) studied the effects of teacher feedback directed entirely at macrolevel features of community college student prewriting judged to be effective. For example, where sections of student writing exhibited effective unity, this was pointed out in the form of positive oral or written comments. No comments were made regarding any macrolevel deficiencies or microlevel errors in spelling, word choice and punctuation. Goodman found significant gains in pre- to posttest measures of amplitude (number of words written per hour) and coherence (the number of arbitrarily selected cohesive factors selected during that hour). She suggested, based on a pre- to posttest self-actualization survey, that positive teacher comments on these students' writing improved their perceptions of their own communication abilities as well as their actual ability to communicate. Goodman provided evidence that essay length and organization may be improved by positive teacher feedback.

Teacher feedback and peer feedback. A number of researchers have demonstrated the efficacy of teacher feedback on the processes and products of writing by comparing teacher feedback to peer feedback. Relevant studies have been located at the high school and college levels.

Bender (1989) compared the roles of teacher comment, peer comment, and student self-evaluation in the revision processes of advanced and novice college writers. She provided written comments and organized peer feedback for the first drafts of first-year composition students. More proficient students were allowed only peer feedback and self-evaluation. Bender discovered through observation, questionnaires and analyses of first and final drafts of six case study writers that both teacher and peer feedback have specific benefits for revision. However, both more proficient and less proficient writers who lacked confidence in their own writing appeared to require teacher feedback in addition to peer support. Peer comments primarily supplemented teacher comments, and supplanted them only when they were in line with the teacher's goals for the writing. As well, while peer feedback was associated with clarification and reorganization, teacher comments were associated more with major content revisions. This researcher provided evidence for the value of teacher written comment by showing it to be more likely than peer comments to result in the major revisions which might improve the writing quality of both advanced and novice writers.

Boss (1988) provided further support for the advantages of written teacher feedback over peer feedback on the writing of first-year college students. Students were assigned to groups receiving either teacher written comments and corrections or peer feedback. A set of analytic composition scales was employed for both treatments to guide draft revision and grading. While both groups showed significant pre- posttest gains in writing quality, these gains were not significantly different. However, these students were found through an attitude survey to prefer explicit teacher feedback over peer feedback. This researcher provided further support for the advantages of explicit teacher feedback by revealing significant pre- to posttest improvement in writing quality and a student preference for this type of feedback.

Some researchers have found neither a significant increase in needed revisions nor improvements in writing as a result of providing teacher feedback. For example, Onore (1983) found that revisions done by college writers in response to teacher comments did not improve text quality significantly. She concluded from analyses of student reporting-in-protocols, interviews and text drafts that teacher involvement in students' writing processes is more important that feedback on students' written products in improving their abilities to write. Onore stated,

> Good teacher commentary demands reentry into the composing process without a necessary textual result, that redrafting is not the cure for composing problems, that revision may be defined as the discovery and exploration of new meanings and connections, and that growth resides in writers' processes and not in the texts they produce.

In sum, investigators of feedback on prewriting have shown that teacher written feedback is generally more effective than students' self-evaluations, peer feedback or no feedback in improving postinstructional writing quality and/or increasing the amount of writing. This feedback appears to be most effective when it is explicit and directed at macrolevel features of writing, matched with instructional emphases and evaluation criteria, and focussed on fewer aspects of writing. Feedback directed at content development is more effective than feedback aimed at surface features of writing, especially for less experienced writers. As well, feedback aimed at prewriting organization may improve the organization of later writing if this feedback is primarily positive. Finally, writers characterized as having a negative concept of their writing abilities may write more and improve their writing organization as a result of positive feedback.

Summary of Literature Review

Investigators have shown that writing instruction delineated in terms of a number of instructional foci and generic activities, single foci, or the generic activities of prewriting and feedback may enhance the quality and/or increase the length of writing. While each of these types of instruction were shown to consist of certain characteristics, some features common to all types are apparent. The aim of this section is to summarize these features and their effects on writing in order to provide a background to the statement of the research problem.

General studies. Researchers of instruction delineated in terms of a number of foci and activities have noted that longer overall periods and more class time for instruction, specific instructional emphases and prewriting were associated with higher quality and/or longer essays. The most effective instructional emphases and prewriting were shown to be those most closely matched to the mode and features of writing evaluated by post-instructional writing tests. For expository writing improvement, instructional emphasis and prewriting in developing content is likely to be effective for less proficient writers. More time to research the writing topic, more prewriting, more teacher feedback and revision and a match between instructional and testing conditions were also identified as effective instructional features.

Study of models of writing. Researchers of the the study of models of writing have demonstrated that systematic teaching of the recognition of mode-specific features of writing along with extensive prewriting aimed at integrating those features into writing were effective in improving writing quality and organization. Adequate time for these activities may be especially important to long-term effects on writing. It was also shown that an instructional emphasis on single features of specific modes of writing matched with writing evaluation criteria is effective. Instructional variables cited as affecting the outcome of model study included the frequency of prewriting, the reading abilities of students, and the teacher's approach to instruction.

Inquiry. Researchers of inquiry have shown that facilitation of the use of generic expository writing strategies and direct teaching of critical thinking and logic may improve the quality and increase the amount of argumentative writing completed. Most important to these results were the extent of student verbal interaction, discussion, questioning and prewriting in both transactional and personal modes. An open attitude of teachers to student oral responses was shown to be an important factor in the impact of inquiry on learning argumentative strategies, while certain strategies appear to be more readily learned than others.

Prewriting. Investigators of prewriting have shown that more frequent prewriting over substantial instructional periods may improve the quality of expository writing. This may be true for prewriting about literature studied and for prewriting done to learn generic features of expository writing. It was also shown that more extensive prewriting was associated with improved essay quality where this prewriting was completed in response to inferential questions. Overall, where writing in response to specified readings is desired, students need substantial opportunity to interpret, learn and organize in memory the content of those readings.

Feedback on prewriting. It has been shown that teacher feedback directed at content development and organization is more likely to result in improved quality and longer essays than student self-revision, peer feedback and no feedback. While investigators consistently attributed these results to an emphasis in feedback on content development, it was also claimed that feedback focussed on fewer writing criteria is more effective than feedback diffused over a number of writing criteria. Less proficient writers may benefit most from content feedback, especially if it is explicit. Finally, it was demonstrated that positive teacher comments on macrolevel aspects of less proficient writers' prewriting are effective in enhancing the organization and length of later writing.

Overall, the effectiveness of specific instructional foci in improving the quality and increasing the length of transactional writing may depend largely on the nature and extent of (a) the study of mode-specific features, and (b) discussion and prewriting in regard to these features and mode-specific writing strategies. As well, adequate and frequent prewriting and teacher feedback on the content and organization of prewriting are important. Adequate instructional time and an emphasis on content development features specifically matched to evaluation criteria may be of particular benefit to less proficient writers.

Selection of Independent and Dependent Variables

The purpose of the current investigation was to determine the effects of instruction comprised primarily of the study of models of writing, inquiry, prewriting and teacher feedback on the holistic quality and length of adult academic upgrading student writing. Selection of all these independent and dependent variables was based in part on the awareness of previous studies containing reports of significant associations between them. A number of other considerations were also used to select the dependent measures.

An holistic measure of writing quality was selected, first, because it could provide a single measure accounting for a number of criteria commonly used to assess transactional writing (Myers, 1980). At the same time, variable weightings could be assigned to each of these criteria according to the emphases of the experimental condition and the students' strengths and weaknesses in writing. Thus, for this study, a holistic quality score was presumed to provide a valid measure of the students' responses to instruction emphasizing content development and organization and providing minimal attention to surface language features. These were, in order, the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the students, as based on the review of literature.

The high reliability of holistic quality scoring has been established in previous research and is another reason for selecting this measure. For example, Cooper (1977) reported that "When rater's are from similar backgrounds and they are trained with a holistic scoring guide ... they can achieve scoring reliabilities in the high eighties and nineties on their summed scores from multiple pieces of a student's writing " (p.19).

Finally, holistic scoring of writing quality would allow for judgments about surface writing errors interfering with the readability of essays. While surface feature errors were less heavily weighted, judgments about this criterion were felt to be essential to a valid assessment of quality.

In sum, an holistic quality score was viewed as a valid and reliable measure of written responses to the major emphases of the experimental condition. This measure would also allow for variable weighting to suit the perceived writing strengths and weaknesses of the participating students.

The second dependent variable, essay length, was defined for the purposes of this study as the total number of words per essay (Mullis and Mellon, 1980). Length was selected for the following reasons. First, it was expected that essay length would be a valid measure of the subjects' responses to the experimental emphasis on content development. Although more words may not necessarily indicate a more detailed and well-developed essay, researchers have shown that students who have committed more content about the writing topic to memory write longer essays (Chesky, 1987). Thus, assuming that substantial instruction (the experimental condition) focussed on the learning of topic-specific content would result in more information committed to memory than limited instruction simply introducing a topic (the control condition), it was hypothesized that substantial instruction would, similarly, result in longer essays.

Secondly, it was expected that essay length would provide a simple, yet accurate indicator of written responses to the experimental emphasis on organization. Chesky (1987) also provided support for this expectation by showing that students who hold in memory a more highly organized knowledge of a topic also produce longer essays. Again, assuming that substantial instruction in organizing topic-specific content would produce a more highly organized knowledge of a topic than limited instruction in this skill, it was hypothesized that the experimental treatment would, similarly, result in longer essays.

Statement of the Research Problem

The general purpose of the research conducted was to assess the efficacy of writing instruction delivered over a substantial period of time on the transactional writing performance of adult academic upgrading students. This purpose was met through a comparison of the impacts of two instructional conditions on essay quality and essay length. The experimental condition consisted of about ten hours of instruction over two weeks emphasizing the content development and organization of written arguments on one topic and the control condition consisted of about one-half hour of introduction to a second writing topic. Two specific research questions were investigated as follows:

1. What is the difference between the impact of substantial writing instruction comprised primarily of the study of models of argumentative writing, inquiry using topic-specific data, prewriting and teacher feedback and the impact

of limited writing instruction comprised of a brief topic introduction on the quality of adult academic upgrading students' argumentative writing?

2. What is the difference between the impact of substantial writing instruction comprised primarily of the study of models of argumentative writing, inquiry using topic-specific data, prewriting and teacher feedback and the impact of limited writing instruction comprised of a brief topic introduction on the length of adult academic upgrading students' argumentative writing?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The subjects of this study were 30 students from two Grade 10 English adult academic upgrading classes in a large vocational college. The two classes were those of one teacher who had volunteered to participate following a request by the researcher to the senior English instructor. Permission to involve these students in the required classroom instruction and writing test was obtained from the college's research and development office and the chairperson of the academic upgrading department.

Participants in the two classes were 10 male and 20 female students ranging in age from 19 to 45 years including 9 nonnative and 21 native speakers of English as well as the regular classroom teacher. Specific data on course entry reading and writing abilities and other characteristics of students were not available.

One reason for the selection of these students was that it was convenient to investigate two intact classroom groups receiving instruction from a single teacher. Acquiring volunteers or students with more specific characteristics would have meant major interruptions of regular classes. A second reason was that students were identified as having similar reading abilities based on their performances on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Thirdly, students were predicted to have similar writing abilities on the basis of institutional writing requirements for entry into Grade 10 English. Finally, these students were predicted to be capable of writing argumentative essays providing a thesis and supporting points since many had received recent instruction in that mode of writing.

Consent to proceed with this study was obtained from the students through a memorandum which outlined the study's purposes and assured anonymity and the option to withdraw at any time. All students enrolled in the two classes participated.

Design

A two condition within subjects design in which all subjects were administered both experimental and control treatments was employed for this study. Subjects were selected as two intact classroom groups which were offered for research by the cooperating teacher. To control for the transfer of essay writing experience between tests of responses to the two conditions, counterbalancing was implemented. Each of the two intact classes was divided into two groups with equal numbers of students. On the first day of testing, and for each class, one of these two groups was tested for its response to the experimental condition, while the second group was tested for its response to the control condition. On the second day of testing, all students were tested for their responses to the condition for which they had not yet been tested.

Procedures

Instructional Design for Experimental and Control Writing Topics

A number of preparations were made prior to classroom writing instruction for both conditions. Selection of writing topics, research questions, subtopics and materials was undertaken in consultation with the cooperating classroom teacher and students.

Selection of Writing Topics

One topic for each of the two conditions was selected. Criteria for both topics included that they would be (a) of interest to students, and (b) well-established in easily available literature which would also be manageable by students in terms of reading difficulty. Meeting these criteria was presumed to be important to the elicitation of two- to three-page argumentative essays which could be evaluated as part of the college's English 10 curriculum.

The experimental condition writing topic (gun control) was selected by the students from a list of several topics suggested by the researcher and the cooperating teacher. These topics had been identified as being familiar enough to students such that after approximately 10 one-hour periods of classroom writing instruction over two weeks, students could write essays scoring significantly higher on holistic quality and length than they could on a second topic receiving only a brief introduction. This hypothesis was based largely on the reasoning that students researching a topic and receiving substantial instruction in developing and organizing topic-specific data would write arguments more extensive, developed and organized than students not having these opportunities to prepare for essay writing.

The control condition writing topic (pollution) was selected by the students from a list containing several topics presented by the researcher and cooperating teacher. These topics had been identified on the bases that they would be similar to the experimental topic in interest, familiarity and difficulty such that students could write essays adequate for college curriculum and research purposes following limited instruction. At the same time, students were expected to generate essays scoring significantly lower than the experimental condition topic on measures of holistic quality and length. This expectation was based on the reasoning that the virtual absence of research on the topic and of instruction in developing and organizing research data into writing would result in arguments less extensive, less developed and less organized than those written following substantial research and instruction in developing and organizing data into arguments.

Thus, the impact of classroom writing instruction on postinstructional writing performance was to be determined by a comparison of essay responses to substantial writing instruction on one topic and essay responses to a brief introduction to a second topic. The following section contains a description preinstructional preparation completed to ensure that essays derived from both conditions could be evaluated readily in relation to the content of established literature.

Selection of Questions, Subtopics, and Materials

Subtopics judged to define important areas of discussion in literature accessible to students on the two writing topics were selected to limit the research done by students. Considering the short time available and the extensive bodies of literature on both topics, it was felt that subtopics would also assist students to achieve maximum content development and organization in their essays. To ensure that the assignment of subtopics would meet these objectives, selection was based on a number of criteria. It was decided that subtopics should define areas of argument in both selected literature and materials accessible to students outside of the class. As well, subtopics had to be easy enough for the students such that they could result in effective written arguments in class from memory on three of those personally selected

The task for the experimental writing topic was that students would state and support "yes" or "no" opinions about the need for stricter gun control legislation in Canada. It was decided with the participating teacher that effective arguments in this format could best be elicited through the study of common newspaper and magazine articles. The teacher felt that these publications would be easily comprehended by the students. As well, government documents explaining the basic concepts and history of gun control legislation were suggested as necessary to adequate understanding of arguments presented in the media articles.

Since the media articles selected contained a variety of distinct arguments introduced by specific propositions for and against gun control, these propositions were selected as subtopics. To facilitate student selection of propositions felt to be most familiar and/or strongly supportive of their own opinions, a total of fourteen propositions were extracted from these articles. A research question designed to encourage students to fully develop each of their subtopics was also formulated. This question was 'Should Canadian gun control legislation be stronger?'

Propositions supporting stronger gun control legislation were as follows:

(a) Guns are too easy to get, (b).sentencing is too weak, (c) enforcement of laws is too lax, (d) more guns mean more crime, (e) young people can get guns too easily, (f) there is no need for guns in a peaceful society, (g) people are afraid of guns, and, (h) polls say people don't want guns.

Propositions opposing stronger gun control legislation were these: (a) Gun control restricts the freedom of majority of safe users, (b) present gun control laws are not enforceable, (c) stricter gun control won't deter criminals, (d) guns aren't connected to crime, (e) guns save lives, and (f) crime is rooted in culture and society, not guns.

The task for the control condition writing topic (pollution) required that students argue the need for greater protection of the environment against pollution. It was felt, in this case, that a number of broad concepts likely to be familiar to students from exposure to media or previous study would be appropriate subtopics for eliciting essays adequate for research and curriculum purposes. More specific concepts or propositions not allotted research time may have resulted in essays weak in content development. Subtopics defining three general types of pollution were selected from a review of newspaper and magazine article titles in the Canadian Periodical Index (1980 - 1990). A research question, again designed to elicit maximum content development was formulated. The question was 'Why do we need better protection of our environment against pollution?'

The subtopics identified for study and writing were (a) the causes and effects of water pollution, (b) the causes and effects of air pollution, and (c) the causes and effects of noise pollution.

Instructional Strategies for Experimental Writing Topic

Following are descriptions and rationale of the activities, procedures and materials employed by the researcher to guide study and prewriting on the experimental writing topic. While instruction is described as it was implemented, procedures and materials are categorized in relation to previous research on writing instruction where possible. All instruction was provided by the researcher.except for one to two hours of feedback on first drafts of five-paragraph essays extended by the cooperating teacher.

Introduction to the Topic

The purposes of this activity were to stimulate interest in the issue of gun control, to inform students of the basics of their writing task, and to initiate the building of students' knowledge of this issue. The topic was stated orally and the specific question for research and essay writing was presented on the blackboard for the class. Students were then requested to volunteer their opinions orally and to use any available source of information to briefly support them. Class discussion of individual opinions and notetaking on information perceived to be relevant were encouraged to create interest and to increase the amount of information available to the students for subsequent research and writing. Students were informed that they would be developing an essay on gun control, and that it would be completed in class and graded by their regular teacher as part of their course mark. The duration of this activity was about 20 minutes.

Essay Writing Instructions and Guidelines

The students were provided with written general instructions and guidelines specifying the mode, length, organization and content of essays to be submitted (see Appendix A). The purposes of these were to inform students of the general requirements of acceptable essays and to advise them about specific characteristics of higher scoring essays. The general guidelines on structure and length were distributed and discussed on the second class meeting while specific content guidelines were discussed during the fifth meeting. Both were briefly reviewed just prior to final essay testing

Specific content guidelines consisted of nine categories of information that could be integrated into essay writing (Langer, 1980). These categories were discussed and the students' comprehension of them tested by elicitation of oral examples. It was pointed out that higher scoring essays would be those integrating information considered to demonstrate a higher level of knowledge. For example, definitions demonstrated a higher level than first-hand experience.

The duration of these activities was approximately 20 minutes. Other instructions and guidelines relevant to daily instructional activities were also provided during about 25 minutes of instructional time. Specifics of those instructions are given with the activity for which they were provided.

Content Study and Inquiry

The following section contains a description of those instructional activities, procedures and materials which were primarily aimed at the students' learning and integration into memory of information from readings on the experimental condition writing topic. A secondary objective of this instruction was the learning of the basic argumentative writing strategies of deductive organization and consideration of opposing points of view. General elements of the inquiry reported in previous research were employed.to achieve this learning. These included substantial motivational activities, discussion, questioning and prewriting surrounding topic-specific data.

Small Group Discussion

Students were organized into dyads on several occasions during the two-week period to (a) stimulate the expression of topic-specific personal knowledge and experience and the recall of information from readings and audio-visual materials studied, and (b) assist in the organization of ideas and information into cogent written arguments. Pairs of students working together by personal choice were requested to jot down and share orally with the class their consensus in the form of opinions supported by specific reasons. The class was then encouraged to agree or disagree or question the consensus given and to take notes about information seen as supportive of their personal opinions. Small group work was facilitated for discussion of opinions both on the general topic and specific arguments of gun control. This strategy was applied during about 30 minutes of class time.

Study of Audio-visual Materials

Videocassettes portraying the views of various societal groups advocating or opposing stricter gun control were viewed by the students. As well, information presented within tables, graphs, charts and cartoons was displayed on overhead projections (see Appendix B). The aims of these activities were to motivate class discussion of the topic and to provide opportunity for notetaking and interpretation of verbal and nonverbal data presented. Discussion and notetaking on this data were presumed to assist students in the collection of information needed for detailed support of their opinions on gun control.

Videocassette viewing was followed by brief discussion only, as this activity was intended primarily for motivation and notetaking. Students were also encouraged to look at both sides of the issue before developing their opinions. Sample interpretations of data presented on overheads were provided orally and student interpretations were requested given the questions "What does it mean?", and "How could this information support your position?". Opportunity to discuss information identified by both the students and the researcher was provided. The duration of film viewing and discussion of film contents was about 30 minutes, while the discussion of fact sheets and cartoons constituted about 35 minutes.

Study of Topic-specific Literature

A variety of reading activities and materials was employed to increase the extent and organization of topic-specific information available to the students for other pretesting activities and the in-class essay test. During class time, students were assisted in locating this information in the readings distributed, discussing its content and organization, and preparing to integrate it into convincing arguments. Canadian government documents regarding gun control as well as newspaper and magazine articles pertinent to the gun control debate in Canada, the United States and Europe were used as sources of information. Following are descriptions of the nature and purposes of specific activities undertaken.

Background and legislation. The researcher employed overhead projections and photocopies of the government documents to orient the students to important information. This data consisted primarily of basic definitions, objectives, history and legislation relevant to gun control. Students were requested to highlight in copies of the documents distributed to them the information identified by the researcher as important for their essays. Key definitions, literal comprehension questions and a question designed for students to collect data supporting their opinions were assigned for out-of-class completion in written form (see Appendix C). This activity was limited to the first and second instructional days and was completed in about 35 minutes.

Introduction to arguments for and against stricter gun control. Recent newspaper and magazine articles on the issue of gun control were distributed during the second and fourth class meetings. Literal and inferential comprehension questions requiring students to reproduce factual information and summarize selected arguments presented in the articles were assigned for out-of-class completion (see Appendix C). A preview of the questions was provided to ensure effective and efficient completion.

Feedback for student answers to the questions was given one day after each set of readings was assigned. Information relevant to the questions was highlighted and displayed on overhead projections and students were encouraged to correct and complete their responses where necessary and to express points of agreement and disagreement orally. This introduction to established arguments occurred during the third and fifth meetings and occupied about 30 minutes of instructional time.

Study and prewriting of arguments. These activities were initiated in discussion of the content and organization of sample arguments identified by the researcher and the students in the articles distributed. Students were then assigned to study these and the remaining arguments and to prepare for writing from memory during the next class periods. One objective was that students would become familiar enough with the content of arguments both supporting and opposing stricter gun control legislation to participate in class discussion. The second was that they would be able to select arguments which they could most readily present because of personal knowledge, interest and/or commitment to these arguments. Thirdly, it was expected that extensive study and prewriting would be necessary for students to internalize the deductive organization and specific content of three arguments well enough to present them from memory during posttesting.

To prepare for the first in-class prewriting task, students were asked to commit to memory one argument supporting their basic opinions on gun control. For the prewriting task assigned on the fourth class meeting, they were asked to write out in point form outlines all that they could recall about the argument selected. These outlines were collected for written and oral feedback and returned to students on the following day for further research and writing.

Preparation for the second in-class writing task consisted of general spoken feedback to the class on their outlines submitted and discussion of the arguments in the articles not yet covered. Students were provided with a written list of the eight pro-gun control and six anti-gun control propositions described earlier. The researcher again discussed how the remaining propositions were supported by adequate and deductively organized detail. Finally, students were requested to choose two more arguments and to prepare paragraph form summaries for in-class prewriting from memory on the following day. Feedback was again provided as it was for the first writing task.

These outlines and summaries were assigned during the third and fifth class meetings following discussion of vocabulary and comprehension questions assigned previously. In-class writing occurred during the fourth and sixth meetings. Identification and discussion of sample arguments comprised about

50 minutes of instructional time while instructions regarding study and in-class writing occupied about 10 minutes and in-class writing occurred during 40 minutes. Following written and oral feedback on summaries and outlines, students were assigned on the sixth meeting to prepare first drafts of five-paragraph argumentative essays including introductory and concluding paragraphs.

Instruction in reading strategies. Since the subjects were having difficulty answering the first set of comprehension questions, brief instruction in scanning techniques was provided. Key words from sample comprehension questions were identified and their application in locating specific information in the readings was demonstrated. Students practiced this technique by locating information using key words from other questions and sharing their findings with the class. This activity was implemented during the fourth meeting and lasted for 15 minutes.

In sum, activities involving inquiry consisted of discussion and writing activities emphasizing the students' learning of topic-specific content and basic strategies of argumentative writing. These activities occupied about four hours of instructional time.

Study of Models of Argumentative Writing

The study of models of writing involved primarily the illustration and discussion of thesis-support arguments as presented in sample single paragraphs and outlines of single paragraphs. The major objective of this study was that students would be able to recognize and write deductive arguments in the form of opinion statements followed by supporting details. Secondly they would become familiar with how varying levels of content knowledge could be represented in essays receiving higher scores. Three types of models were employed as follows.

Outlines of arguments unrelated to gun control. First, questions about topics expected to motivate the participation of all students were directed to the students. One such question was "Is it better to be single or married?" These questions and the oral responses elicited from students were recorded on the blackboard in point form as "yes" or "no" statements of opinion with supporting details. The general-to-specific organization of the resulting outlines was then discussed by the researcher. The students were asked to record the models for future reference and essay writing. These procedures were repeated using a topic suggested by the students. Time spent on this activity was about 30 minutes during the third and sixth instructional days.

Arguments from topic-specific readings. A number of arguments for and against stronger gun control were selected by the researcher and students from the media articles on gun control previously distributed. Class discussion was then used to demonstrate the deductive organization of these arguments by highlighting and labelling on overhead projections general statements and the supporting points for individual arguments. Students were encouraged to follow the same procedure on their copies of the articles and then to demonstrate an understanding of deductive structure by highlighting and labelling it in other arguments. Feedback to students regarding their understanding was briefly given to the class as a whole. This activity occurred during about 45 minutes of instructional time on the third and fourth class days

Summary paragraphs of arguments in topic-specific readings. Students were asked to identify topic sentences and supporting details in model paragraphs prepared by the researcher as examples of what would be expected in written essays (see Appendix D). They were also taught about various levels of specificity of content knowledge (see Appendix A) and then asked to identify examples of the these levels in the models. Definitions were said to indicate a more specific level of knowledge of the topic while reports of first-hand experience represented the most general knowledge of the topic. Students were reminded that greater content specificity would result in higher scoring essays. They were provided with copies of these models to assist them in their own writing. This activity occurred during about 45 minutes on the fifth day of instruction.

In sum, the use of models of writing constituted about two hours of instructional time and was intended to illustrate general structural and specific content features of the required thesis-support essays. Since a crucial concern was to elicit essays adequate for college curriculum purposes in a limited period of time, model study was primarily focussed on content. The argumentative structure of deductive organization was the secondary emphasis of this activity.

Feedback on Prewriting

Both oral and written feedback were provided by the researcher for comprehension questions, outlines and summaries written in class, and first drafts prepared both during and outside of class time. The participating teacher assisted with some one-to-one conferences for first drafts during the last two class periods before testing.

Feedback on the comprehension questions consisted of spoken comments about responses given orally and voluntarily by students during class time. Specific written comments to individuals and general oral feedback to the class were provided for the outline and two summaries written in class on the three subtopics selected by each of the students. Feedback on first drafts of five-paragraph essays consisted of written comments from the researcher and one-to-one conferences with both the researcher and the participating teacher. Most feedback was given on the day following submission of prewriting.

The essential purpose of feedback was to inform students of the adequacy of content development and organization in their writing. Feedback was directed at these aspects of writing primarily through explicit written comments noting apparent organization and levels of content specificity and suggesting reorganization and/or further elaboration. Microlevel feedback concerned with spelling, sentence structure, lexical choice and mechanics was provided only if weaknesses in these features interfered with comprehension of meaning. Students were encouraged to revise and resubmit all of their writing for further written and/or oral comments. The total time spent on the provision of feedback during class time was about 60 minutes.

Instructional Strategies for Control Writing Topic

The following section contains a summary of the activities, procedures and materials used to stimulate writing on the control condition writing topic (pollution). This instruction was facilitated by the researcher only on the day preceding the first day of the essay writing tests and occupied about one-half hour. There was a brief introduction to the writing topic and task, a class discussion of relevant data and suggestions of how students could organize their available knowledge for essay writing tests.

Topic Introduction

A general definition of the concept of pollution as well as the specific question and subtopics for essay writing were presented on the blackboard. A discussion was then initiated in which students were invited to express and support their opinions on the issue of pollution. This activity lasted for about 10 minutes.

Discussion of Topic-specific Data

Numerical and verbal facts regarding the origins of pollution and, in particular, the deleterious effects of this phenomenon, were presented on overhead projections to stimulate interest in the topic of pollution. These overheads consisted of two pages of information presented in highly detailed paragraphs (see Appendix E). Information perceived to be of special interest was underlined and read orally to the students who were encouraged to offer any comments felt to be relevant. No notetaking was allowed during the 20 minutes of this activity.

Orientation to Essay Writing

A chart was sketched on the blackboard and suggested as a possible framework for students' organization of their knowledge of each of the three subtopics assigned for writing on the issue of pollution. This chart consisted of grids headed by the names of the three general types of pollution on the vertical axis and the labels Location, Causes, and Effects on the horizontal axis. Sample data extracted from the two information sheets were entered onto the chart. Students were then asked to orally provide examples of their own to complete the chart. Again, no notetaking was allowed and students were reminded not to research or discuss the topic before testing. However, they were encouraged to fill in a similar chart outside of class to ensure that their essays' content and organization were adequate for both research and college curriculum purposes.

Essay Writing Tests

All students were requested to write a two- to three-page essay on each of the topics of gun control and pollution during two consecutive classroom periods beginning on the day after the last day of instruction. Following are the specific procedures used to elicit written essay responses to the experimental and control conditions.

On the first day of testing, each of the two classes was divided into two groups equal in numbers of students. For each class, one of the two groups was assigned to write on the experimental topic and the other was assigned to write on the control topic. On the second day of testing, students were assigned to write essays on the topic not written about on the first day.

Specific instructions and advice were provided in writing (see Appendix F) and read with the students to allow for questions. Instructions included a reiteration of each of the subtopics and of the specific question to be written about. Students were given 10 minutes to jot down and organize everything that they could recall about each of their three subtopics. Some general guidelines and advice intended to assist students in maximum recall, organization, clarity, and specificity were also read aloud. Students were then allotted 40 minutes to write essays without the assistance of their organizational notes or any other materials on the topic. Some further specifications and advice regarding content, format, and audience were also given in writing and orally for this final phase of testing.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter contains a description of the procedures used to obtain raw scores for the quality and length of essays written in response to experimental and control conditions. Procedures and results for the analyses of raw scores are also presented.

Holistic Quality Scoring Procedures

The procedures used to establish criteria to rate essays, to identify prototypes (sample essays which illustrate the criteria for each rating on the holistic scale), to score essays using these prototypes, and to achieve interrater reliability were based on Myers' (1980) holistic procedures. Modifications were made in consultation with thesis advisory personnel.

The major criteria for the quality assessment were selected primarily according to the emphases of the experimental treatment, that is, content development and organization of argumentative essays. The minor criteria of punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and sentence structure were selected as being essential to the accurate assessment of any type of writing. As well, it was intended that these secondary criteria could be utilized to make decisions on essays considered to be on the borderline of any of the four holistic ratings. It was decided to overlook grammar errors because of the substantial number of subjects for whom English is a second language.

A system for rating essays on a scale of one to four was selected on the bases of the purpose of scoring and the grade level of students. Myers (1980) has pointed out that six- and eight- point scales are generally employed when three or four grade levels are involved and a spread is required to identify differences in phrasing and maturity of content. In the present study, students were all at the same grade level, and it was felt that the general profile provided by the four-point scale would be sufficient to demonstrate the differential effects of the two conditions.

Prototypes were identified and applied to scoring as follows. First, all essays were read by the researcher and scored according to the initial set of criteria. Next, a second rater received a selection of eight papers considered as prototypical ones, twos, threes and fours for each of the two topics written about. Finally, modifications were made to the initial criteria due to the second rater's inability to distinguish clear threes and fours for some of the essays. The modified criteria and prototypes (see Appendix G) were then used by the researcher to score the remaining essays on the four-point holistic scale .

Interrater reliability was established as follows. Essays were randomly selected from a stack of all papers until a total of 10 essays was chosen which included at least one paper for each of the four possible holistic scores. Clean copies of these 10 papers were then submitted to a third rater, a practicing teacher of composition. This rater was informed of the holistic scoring procedures used by the researcher through a discussion of the modified prototypes and criteria. He then scored the 10 essays and the percentage of agreement on quality scores between himself and the researcher was determined. Since a 90% agreement was reached, scores previously assigned by the researcher to all papers were tabulated for analyses.

Analysis of Holistic Quality Scores

Observed and expected frequencies of holistic scores were calculated for essays written in response to both the experimental and the control conditions. A chi-square test was performed to ascertain if significant differences existed in the quality of essays produced by the two conditions. It had been predicted that essays written following substantial instruction would be of significantly higher quality than essays written following limited instruction. However, no significant differences were found in the quality of argumentative essays produced by these two conditions. Observed and expected frequencies for holistic scores and the results of the chi-square analysis are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Observed/Expected Frequencies of Holistic Quality Scores

	Holistic Rating			
Condition	1	2	3	4
Experimental	1/2.5	17/17.5	9/7.5	3/2.5
Control	4/2.5	18/17.5	6/7.5	2/2.5

Chi square = 2.75; $p<.05$; df3.

Note. N = 30 for each condition.

Length Scoring Procedures

The total number of words was counted for all essays generated. Words indicating numeric values were omitted from this count .

Analysis of Length Scores

Means and standard deviations for both experimental and control condition essay length scores were calculated. A paired t test was then performed to ascertain if significant differences existed between these two groups.of essays. A one-tailed t test was applied since it had been predicted that essays written following substantial instruction would be longer than essays written following limited instruction. However, the t test failed to validate this prediction as no significant differences were found between mean essay lengths for the two conditions (see Table 2).

TABLE 2

T test for Essay Length Differences

Condition	M	SD
Experimental	350.467	82.186
Control	341.333	97.810

Paired t value = .502; p = .3098, one-tailed; df29.

Note. N = 30 for each condition.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter begins with a discussion of factors which may have influenced the outcomes of this study. Next are limitations of the study including brief explanations of the possible roles of factors out of control of the researcher. Following are conclusions about the impact of writing instruction. Finally are some recommendations for further research as based on the findings of this study.

Discussion

For the adult high school students of the present study, substantial writing instruction did not produce argumentative essays that were significantly longer or higher in quality than those written following limited writing instruction. Available demographic data, observations made by the researcher of student responses to the experimental condition, literature relevant to these students and a number of instructional features are used to explain these results.

Student Factors

Reading Ability

Effective student involvement in instructional activities and performance on the argumentative writing tests may have been significantly affected by the students' reading abilities. While course entry reading scores were not available, it is suggested that ability was generally lower than that of the high school and college students of previously successful research. Students ranged in age from 19 to 45 years and so it is reasonable to assume that a substantial proportion of them had left school, perhaps due to lower academic achievement. It is likely that facility in reading was an important factor in those situations as reading ability is central to most school subjects. It may also be that the life experience of these adults with the issue of concern was a factor in their comprehension of the topic-specific readings. It has been shown that personal experience with a given concept may interfere with understanding of the meaning of that concept intended by the writer (Nicholson, 1984).

Because of reading ability, students may have had problems in comprehending the large amount of relatively difficult and unfamiliar topic-specific information presented to them. Magazine articles distributed contained somewhat detailed arguments based on concepts of gun control legislation not widely discussed in common media. The apparent need to teach scanning techniques to complete literal comprehension questions is one indicator that students had difficulty comprehending these articles.

It may also be that reading abilities affected writing performance by reducing the potential impact of the study of models of writing. While the study of models was a major aspect of instruction, reading and analysis of the models was described by a number of researchers as an activity fundamental to effective model study (Austin, 1983; Knudson, 1988). Perry (1980) actually demonstrated that higher initial reading skill was associated with the positive impact of model study. Considering the importance of proficiency in reading to model study, students may have been less able than those of previous research to benefit from this instruction. Because of difficulty in analyzing the models presented, they may not have learned the features of argumentative writing illustrated in the models well enough to transfer these features effectively to writing.

Reading ability may also have influenced the impact of prewriting. While some researchers have shown that more prewriting about a given topic is associated with greater gains in the quality of later writing on the same topic (Marshall, 1987), others have noted that comprehension of the readings upon which writing is to be based is a crucial factor in these results. For examples, Reilly (1986) maintained that prewriting will be ineffective if reading materials are too difficult, and Louque (1983) attributed the lack of significant prewriting effects on later writing quality to lower reading abilities. Considering that these conditions may have existed in the present study, students might not have benefited significantly from prewriting.

Information Processing Ability

It may be that students had difficulty in processing the information in the topic-specific readings. This was a particularly important skill considering the requirement to write essays from memory without the benefit of these readings or prewritten materials. One indication that students may have experienced problems processing topic-specific information effectively was their generally limited oral participation during in-class discussions. Clearly, voluntary participation in discussion of any topic is more likely if the topic is well understood and organized in memory. Another possible indicator of processing difficulty was the prominence of prewriting which was almost verbatim from the readings. This prewriting lacked breadth and suggests that students may have had difficulty in integrating information from the variety of sources provided into their writing.

The effectiveness of oral and written teacher feedback on prewriting may also have been reduced by the students' information processing skills. It could be that the low rate of student revision of prewriting was, in part, due to this factor. Cohen (1987a) provided support for this hypothesis in showing that students consistently have difficulties in processing teacher feedback well enough to make significant writing improvement.

Considering the requirement for in-class writing from memory, both prewriting and final tests of writing may also have been affected significantly by weaknesses in information processing skill. While it is commonly accepted that information which is processed more effectively is also better recalled, research showing positive associations between the organization of information in memory and better writing (Langer, 1984; Chesky, 1987) is further evidence for this contention.

Participation in Discussion

While oral discussion has been identified by previous researchers as an important element in most of the instructional activities used in the present study, voluntary student responses during class time, small group and one-to-one discussions were generally limited. This may have also reduced the potential impact of a number of major instructional activities of the current investigation.

Limited discussion could have reduced the impact of the study of models of argumentative writing. Research in which adequate discussion is consistently identified as crucial to the learning of features illustrated in models (Austin, 1983; Knudson, 1988) is evidence for this hypothesis.

Discussion may have also influenced the impact of inquiry. In his research on inquiry, Pisano (1980) attributed improvement in the quality of high school argumentative writing largely to questioning designed to stimulate critical thinking. For the current study, questioning was an aspect of most instruction as it was employed to encourage students' critical viewing of films, to elicit interpretations of numerical data displayed and to draw attention to the use of the writing strategies illustrated in topic-specific readings. It may be that the limited response to this questioning reduced the impact of these inquiry activities.

Finally, the impact of written teacher feedback may have been affected by limited discussion in the form of revision conferences. It may be that this feedback had little positive influence on writing since the amount of revision done in response to it was apparently very low. More revision has been associated with improved writing quality by a number of researchers (Beach, 1979; Land, 1984). More discussion through one-to-one conferences is likely to have increased the amount of revision since such dialogue could clarify and expand students' understanding of needed revisions. While such opportunities were available for a number of hours daily outside the classroom, few students sought this help.

Motivation

Student motivation may not have been high enough for effective integration of a large amount of unfamiliar information into a relatively difficult mode of writing in a comparatively short time. Limited classroom discussion, submission of first drafts and numbers of students seeking assistance in revising their prewriting were possible indicators of this.

The impact of inquiry activities on the quality of writing might have been reduced by lower motivation if Troyka (1974) is correct. Troyka found that over one semester of instruction, a selected inquiry technique resulted in significant gains in the quality of remedial college student argumentative essay writing. She attributed this outcome to certain features of prewriting and student verbal communication which provided increased motivation due to a diminished threat of failure. Extensive student interaction and prewriting requiring students to utilize familiar writing strategies were suggested to provide these benefits.

The present study included a number of instructional features similar to those used by Troyka as it was concentrated on two basic strategies of argumentative writing. Reading, discussion and prewriting were facilitated to teach these strategies. Small group discussion, audio-visual presentations and discussion of numerical data were used to involve students in the issue through peer interaction, the opportunity to express personal ideas, and stimulation of thinking. Personal choice of subtopics of the issue was another motivational feature. However, while both Troyka (1974) and Pisano (1980) attributed learning of argumentative strategies and improved writing quality largely to the amount of prewriting and discussion during inquiry, language production in these senses was low during the present study. It may be that motivation played an important role in that situation.

Writing Ability

Although course entry writing scores were not available, it may be that the writing skills of students were not strong enough for the task set out. This judgment is based in part on the observation that prewriting was generally brief and weak in content development and organization. It lacked, in general, the kind of elaboration that might indicate a comprehensive integration of information from the topic-specific readings. Little evidence of the consideration of opposing points of view (a standard strategy of argumentation) was apparent. A second indicator of generally low writing proficiency in relation to the task was the large proportion of final essays assessed quality scores of two on a scale of four.

Assuming that these are valid indicators of generally lower writing abilities, it may be that students of the present study possessed a number of specific characteristics of less proficient adult writers identified by researchers. Such descriptions, in turn, suggest more specific explanations of how writing abilities may have reduced the impact of instruction.

Perl (1979) pointed out that unskilled college writers are weak in planning skills. It may be that the often list-like quality of supporting points and the lack of elaborating details were reflections of deficiencies in planning ability for students of the present study. Generally unclear summaries and sparse outlines completed for in-class prewriting were other possible indicators of underdeveloped planning skills.

Another trait of unskilled writers widely discussed is weakness in the ability to elaborate ideas. In their studies of basic high school and college writers, Shaughnessey (1977) and Cayer and Sacks (1979) attributed poor elaboration to inadequate knowledge of strategies specific to this skill. For example, one such strategy cited by Shaughnessey involves allowing for the "incubation" of ideas. She suggested that basic writers tend to begin writing before this event has occurred. It may be that this phenomenon accounts in part for the substantial amount of somewhat unoriginal prewriting that was submitted. The contention of Marshall (1987) that skill in elaboration during prewriting is crucial to improving the quality of later writing is further evidence that lack of student skill in elaboration may have contributed substantially to the current writing outcomes.

Instructional and Testing Factors

It is probable that a number of aspects of instruction influenced the results of this study substantially. These include time for instruction, accreditation for prewriting, topic and subtopic selection, and classroom instructions. As well, essay testing conditions may have affected demonstration of the gains actually made by students in their abilities to write arguments on the experimental writing topic.

Time

First, the overall period of time available for the experimental treatment may have been insufficient. While two weeks were allotted by the cooperating institution, this was significantly less time than was allowed for previously successful instruction. For examples, Sanders and Littlefield observed the results of five weeks of instruction, Markwood and Shaughnessey (1977) studied one college semester, and Strugala (1983) studied the effects of sixteen weeks of instruction. As well, a number of researchers specifically implicated time as an important factor in writing improvement (McQueen, Murray and Evans, 1963; Woodward and Phillips, 1967; Bamberg, 1978; Perry, 1980; Markwood, 1981; Allen,1985). These researchers showed that students receiving more instruction, and, in particular, more instruction aimed at the specific writing features evaluated, demonstrated superior writing abilities.

Considering these differences in overall periods of instruction and the demonstrated importance of this factor, it may be that students needed more time to prepare for the essay writing test. Class time was devoted mostly to discussion of the content-specific readings and to lecture, illustration and perception checks regarding the desired features of essays to be written. Thus, students were expected to complete most of their study and integration into writing of content-specific information outside of class time. The demands of other courses and of adulthood may have limited the amount out-of-class time that students could commit to these preparatory tasks.

Students may have required more time to sufficiently understand the issue of concern. While efforts were made to ensure that experimental and control writing topics were similar, substantial differences may have existed between these topics in their familiarity to the students. For example, the issue of gun control has had less media coverage and public attention over recent years than has the issue of pollution. Most of the available time may have been needed to learn the basic concepts of gun control, leaving little time for a deeper understanding. Assuming that students generally lacked strong reading and information processing skills, and that essays were to be written from memory in class, it is reasonable to claim that adequate out-of-class time to acquire this understanding was especially important.

Students may have needed more time to benefit from the study of models of writing. Some model study researchers have directly attributed insufficient time to the nonsignificant impact of this type of instruction (Perry, 1980). Others have explained that it is one thing to recognize specified features of writing in models and yet another to apply these features effectively to writing performance (Hillocks, 1986). Thus, although classroom instruction in specified features of argumentative writing was provided, it may be that the amount of prewriting in applying these features to writing was not sufficient. The importance of adequate prewriting to successful model study has been espoused consistently by researchers of this instructional focus (Perry, 1980; Austin, 1983; Knudson, 1988).

It may be that the overall instructional period was insufficient to achieve the clear benefits of inquiry observed by previous researchers. In general, researchers of inquiry specified extensive prewriting in order to internalize strategies specific to argumentation. Again, while prewriting directed at these strategies was expected to be completed out of class, students may have felt short of time to use strategies requiring more reading and writing than was necessary to achieve credit. For example, they may have avoided attention to opposing points of view and still presented the arguments they had selected. It is generally accepted, however, that arguments based on consideration of opposing points of view are likely to be better elaborated and more convincing than those not using such information. It has also been demonstrated experimentally that consideration of opposing points of view may contribute significantly to improved argumentative writing (McCleary, 1979).

Accreditation

Based on substantial experience of the researcher in teaching writing, it may be that the generally low amount and quality of prewriting submitted for feedback were consequences, in part, of a lack of credit. Although outlines, summaries and first drafts of essays were assigned to all students, no credit was awarded for this prewriting. One influence of credit has been explained in terms of perceptions of writers of the role of their audience. For example, Langer (1984) explained that high school students wrote substantially less when the teacher was perceived as an examiner rather than a contributor to ongoing development of the writing topic. Students concentrated on what instructions from the teacher had led them to believe would be the essential elements of credit. It may be that students of the present study used a similar strategy due to comparable perceptions of the reseracher as an examiner, thereby restricting the amount of prewriting completed.

Writing Topic and Subtopics

In spite of measures taken to select a topic of interest to all students, it may be that a substantial number of students were not interested or willing enough to involve themselves fully in the topic assigned. While a few students who were gun owners demonstrated strong views on the subject of gun control during discussion, others limited their input. It is possible that negative real-life experiences or, perhaps, lack of experience with the subject matter reduced the willingness of other students to discuss the matter.

Differences in the subtopics used for research on the two topics may have also affected outcomes. It may be that the experimental condition subtopics were more restrictive than the subtopics assigned for the control condition. The greater specificity of gun control subtopics may have limited the amount of information from nonreading sources that could have been integrated by students into their writing. The more general nature of pollution subtopics may have been conducive to the use of information from a wider variety of sources such as media and first-hand experience. This may have been an advantage to students in terms of content development for the topic of pollution.

Classroom Instructions

The motivation for students to write more and to elaborate more may have been curtailed by instructions given. Students were informed during the second class that they would be required to write only two to three pages on the topic assigned. As well, they were instructed to limit the amount of more general, personal information and to concentrate on specific information from reliable written sources. It may be that students followed these instructions closely, thereby reducing their prewriting. Research showing that more prewriting is associated with improvement in the quality of later writing (Woodward and Phillips, 1967; Reilly, 1983; Marshall, 1987) is evidence that the students' generally limited prewriting may also have also reduced the quality of their argumentative essays.

Testing Conditions

Finally, certain essay testing conditions may have reduced the impact of instruction. Students wrote on assigned topics from memory in a specified time without the benefit of prewritten materials. Sanders and Littlefield (1977) maintained that such conditions may not register the writing skill improvements actually acquired from classroom instruction. It seems clear that writing on topics of the students' own choosing without the need to remember substantial information and with extra time to write would be of particular benefit to less proficient writers.

In sum, writing instruction was focussed at all times on those features of writing most heavily weighted for the holistic evaluation, that is, content development and organization. However, a number of student and experimental factors may have confounded the impact of these emphases on the quality and length of postinstructional essays. Students may not have possessed the reading, information processing and writing abilities needed to integrate a relatively large amount of unfamiliar and conceptually difficult information into well-elaborated arguments. Limited overall time, motivation and certain instructional guidelines may have interacted with these abilities to seriously limit the amount of prewriting completed. On the whole, this shortage of prewriting may have been the major factor reducing the intended benefits of writing instruction.

Limitations of the Study

The absence of significant effects for writing instruction on the quality and length of argumentative essays can be attributed in part to a number of factors beyond the control of the researcher. These factors can be described broadly in terms of institutional requirements, experimental conditions, student characteristics and student behavior in response to this condition.

1. Variation in the reading and writing abilities of the students may have affected the validity of the results. While these abilities have been demonstrated to affect writing performance, they could not be strictly controlled without major disruptions to the institution.

2. The overall period of time available for this research may have limited students in their abilities to respond effectively. The cooperating institution was able to allot two weeks in comparison to the five or more weeks applied to most previously successful research on instruction. It may be that this condition particularly reduced the opportunity for the generally less experienced writers of this study to effectively complete preparatory reading and writing assignments.

3. Since students were to receive institutional credit for the final written

essays alone, control of the extent of topic-specific study and prewriting was limited. Extra credit is one way to increase the extent of this preparatory work.

4. No accurate means of controlling the difficulty, familiarity and interest to students of topics selected for writing were available. It may be that variation in any or all of these criteria contributed significantly to the results, thereby reducing the validity of the comparison made.

5. The time available for this study did not allow for students to improve their generic writing skills significantly. However, any improvements in such skills as argumentative content development and organization gained through the experimental treatment could have been applied equally to both experimental and control posttests, thus affecting the validity of the comparison

6. Finally, this study was limited by the researcher's familiarity with the students as individuals and by his own knowledge of the intricacies of effective writing instruction.

Conclusions

It is concluded that ten hours of classroom writing instruction over two weeks emphasizing the study of models of writing, inquiry into topic-specific data, prewriting and teacher feedback may not improve the quality or increase the length of adult academic upgrading students' argumentative writing significantly. Certain features of this instruction as well as student academic ability and motivation to participate both during and outside of the class may confound its intended benefits.

No conclusions can be made about the influence of these factors on model study, inquiry, prewriting or teacher feedback on prewriting since essays were analyzed as products of these activities as a whole. However, the impacts of certain general instructional features stated by previous researchers as crucial to writing improvement and which were also prominent in the experimental condition may have been affected significantly. The extent and nature of study, discussion and prewriting directed at the integration of the content of topic-specific readings into writing appear to be those features.

The impact of study and discussion of topic-specific information may have been significantly reduced by the students' abilities to read, comprehend and process this content and by their interest in and familiarity with the writing topic.

The effective learning of a relatively extensive amount of information on a complex social issue in a brief period of time may have required language reception abilities beyond those generally held by the students.

The impact of prewriting may have been significantly reduced by the students' skills in developing and organizing written arguments, by the extent of their participation in activities aimed at learning general principles of argumentative writing, by their reading abilities and by their understanding of the writing topic. It may be that these factors all reduced the amount of prewriting completed, and, in turn, the extent of learning about the topic as well as feedback and revision of written representations of this learning.

A number of instructional factors may have also reduced the potential benefits of study, discussion and prewriting. In particular, the time available to students to apply classroom learning to study and prewriting may have been insufficient, especially considering the relative academic skills of students. The lack of credit for pretest exercises may have also reduced the amount of preparatory work done by students with adult responsibilities and substantial other coursework.

In sum, adult academic upgrading students may require more extensive preparatory work.than was provided for by this study if instruction is to have a significant influence on their argumentative writing. While insufficient time for preparation is an obvious impediment to this end, a host of other instructional features and student characteristics can be said to account for the impact of writing instruction on argumentative writing performance.

Implications for Further Research

Although the experimental treatment did not confirm the hypothesis that instruction would affect argumentative writing performance significantly in the time allotted, a number of recommendations for subsequent study can be made. Future research might be aimed at testing the separate impacts on writing of important generic features of writing instruction identified during the present study. As well, lengthier investigations of the impacts of specific instructional foci are suggested.

1. Considering the apparent importance of receptive language skills to transactional writing done in response to literature, more research aimed at

identifying effective reading activities for adult students might be fruitful. Studies of how adult students' writing can best be enhanced by combinations of vocabulary and comprehension exercises, short answer questions and questions requiring more extensive writing are suggested. While reading exercises inviting more extensive writing have been reported as most effective for mainstream high school and college students, it is likely that exercises aimed at basic concepts and information will continue to be important to less proficient writers.

2. Studies aimed at identifying those features of writing instruction resulting in more prewriting and the influence of these features on specific measures of writing might be productive. Relevant research questions might be "What are the differences in the prewriting of students receiving credit for this prewriting and those not receiving such credit?", and "Are improvements in the content development, focus, organization and quality of later writing associated with this credit?" Answers to such questions might assist adult educators to increase the amount and control the quality of prewriting done by students. Inadequate prewriting in these senses was deemed in this study to be among the most important factors affecting writing performance.

3. Writing process studies directed at describing the elaborating strategies of less proficient adult writers might provide insights into where to concentrate efforts aimed at improving these strategies. The limited elaboration done by students of the present study during prewriting may have been the most important factor in the impact of prewriting on writing performance.

4. Considering the limited time available for the present study, a more extensive investigation of the impact of the study of models of writing on the writing of adult academic upgrading students is recommended. Various systematic procedures used in previous research to teach mode-specific features of writing might be tested. The aim would be to identify those procedures most effective in helping adult students to recognize these features and to apply this skill in recognition to their writing.

5. Studies of the impacts of various inquiry treatments on inexperienced adult writers might be of value since inquiry may be particularly motivating for these writers. As enhanced motivation was achieved in previous inquiry research largely through extensive student interaction and prewriting, such a study would probably require substantial time.

REFERENCES

Allen, S.A. (1982). A field-based experiment on composition writing. Victoria, BC: University of Victoria, Faculty of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 227 498)

Andreach, J. (1976). The use of models to improve organizational techniques in writing (Doctoral dissertation, Yeshiva University). Dissertation Abstracts International, 36, 4980A.

Austin, D. (1983). Reading to write: The effects of the analysis of essays on writing skills in college composition classes (Doctoral dissertation, University of Alabama). Dissertation Abstracts International, 45, 771A.

Applebee, A. & Langer, J. (1987). How writing shapes thinking: A study of teaching and learning. National Council of Teachers of English.

Bamberg, B. (1978). Composition instruction does make a difference: A comparison of the high school preparation of college freshmen in regular and remedial English classes. Research in the Teaching of English, 12, 47-59.

Beach, R. (1979). The effects of between-draft teacher evaluation versus student evaluation on high school students' revising of rough drafts. Research in the Teaching of English, 13(2), 111-115.

Bender, C.F. (1989). A study of teacher and peer comments in the revision process of college writers (Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University). Dissertation Abstracts International, 51, 437A.

Boss, R.S. (1986). Peer group critiques in formative evaluation of college composition (Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland). Dissertation Abstracts International, 47, 2434A.

Britton, J.N. (1975). The development of writing abilities (11-18). London: MacMillan.

Cayer, R. & Sacks, R. (1979). Oral and written discourse of basic writers: Similarities and differences. Research in the Teaching of English, 13(2), 121-129.

Chapman, C. (1985). The effects of writing apprehension, sex, grade level, frequency and purpose of writing on writing achievement (Doctoral dissertation, Southern Illinois University). Dissertation Abstracts International, 46, 2902A.

Chesky, J. & Hiebert, E. (1987). The effects of prior knowledge and audience on high school students' writing. Journal of Educational Research, 80(5), 304-313

Cohen, A. (1987a). Student processing of feedback on their composition. In A.L. Wenden and J. Rubin (Eds.), Learner strategies in language learning. NJ: Prentice Hall International.

Collins, C. (1981). The use of writing to improve reading comprehension. Boston, MA: National Council of Teachers of English. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 214 102)

Cooper, C. (1977) Holistic evaluation of writing. In C. Cooper and L. Odell (Eds.), Evaluating writing. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Corbett, E. (1981). The status of writing in our society. In M.F. Whiteman (Ed.), Writing: The nature, development, and teaching of written communication, Vol. 1, Variation in writing: Functional and linguistic-cultural differences (pp. 47-52). NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Davis, W. (1988). The effects of process-centered and form-centered instruction on the writing of college freshmen (Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania). Dissertation Abstracts International, 49, 752A.

Dunn, A. (1984). An intensive twelve-week expository writing course for below-average seniors. Florida: Nova University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 314 748)

Erdman, J. (1984). Teaching writing as a potentially liberating activity. Lifelong Learning, 8(3), 4-7.

Goodman, A.D. (1975). Utilization of positive feedback in a classroom environment of acceptance to promote enhanced learner self-concept and improved written performance (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Michigan). Dissertation Abstracts International, 36, 6550A.

Hillocks, G. (1986). Research on written composition: New directions for teaching. Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and the National Conference on Research in English.

Hyslop, N.B. (1983). A study to test the effects of daily writing upon students' skills in explanatory discourse at the eleventh grade level (Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University). Dissertation Abstracts International, 44, 2394A.

Kazamek, F. (1984). I wanted to be a Tencra to help penp to I ... : Writing for adult beginning learners. Journal of Reading, 27, 614-619.

Kazamek, F. (1985). Functional literacy is not enough: Adult literacy as a developmental process. Journal of Reading, 28, 332-335.

Knudson, R.E. (1988). Effects of instructional strategies on student writing (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Riverside). Dissertation Abstracts International, 49, 2955A.

Land, R.E. (1984). Effect of varied teacher cues on higher and lower ability seventh and eleventh grade students' revision of their descriptive essays (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh). Dissertation Abstracts International, 45, 1320A.

Langer, J. (1984). Examining background knowledge and text comprehension. Reading Research Quarterly, 19(4), 468-475.

Langer, J. (1984). The effects of available information on responses to school writing tasks. Research in the Teaching of English, 18(1), 27-44.

Langer, J. (1986b). Learning through writing: Study skills in content areas. Journal of Reading, 27 (4), 400-406.

Levine, K. (1983). Functional literacy: Fond illusions and false economies. Harvard Educational Review, 52(3), 247-266.

Louque, M.P. (1983). Effects of newspaper reading, free writing and guided writing on overall writing quality of seventh grade students (Doctoral dissertation, University of Houston). Dissertation Abstracts International, 44, 2698A.

Markwood, R.A. (1981). An experimental study of the influence of freshmen English on students' writing skills (Doctoral dissertation, University of Colorado). Dissertation Abstracts International, 42, 3479A.

McCleary, W.J. (1979). Teaching deductive logic: A test of the Toulmin and Aristotelian models for critical thinking and college composition (Doctoral dissertation, University of Texas). Dissertation Abstracts International, 40, 1247A.

McLuhan, M. (1967). The medium is the massage. Toronto: Random House.

Marshall, J. (1987). The effects of writing on students' understanding of literary texts. Research in the Teaching of English, 21(1), 30-61.

McQueen, R., Murray, A.K., & Evans, F. (1963). Relationships between writing required in high school and English proficiency in college. Journal of Experimental Education, 31, 419-423.

Mullis, I. & Mellon, J. (1980). Guidelines for describing three aspects of writing: Syntax, cohesion, and mechanics. Denver, CO: National Assessment of Educational Progress. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 205 572)

Myers, M. (1980). A procedure for writing assessment and holistic scoring. Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and the National Council of Teachers of English.

Newell, G. (1987). Writing and learning from text: Case studies of process and product. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 292 101)

Nicholson, T. (1984). Experts and novices: A study of reading in the high school classroom. Reading Research Quarterly, 19, 436-451.

Onore, C.S. (1983). Students' revisions and teachers' comments: Toward a transactional theory of the composing process (Doctoral dissertation: New York University). Dissertation Abstracts International, 45, 1671A.

Padak, G. & Padak, N. (1988). Writing instruction for adults: Present practices and future directions. Lifelong Learning, 12 (3), 4-7.

Perl, S. (1979). The composing processes of unskilled college writers. Research in the Teaching of English, 13 (4), 317-336.

Perry, M.L. (1980). A study of the effects of a literary models approach to composition on writing and reading achievement (Doctoral dissertation, Boston University). Dissertation Abstracts International, 40, 6137A.

Perry, M.M. (1985). The effect of a short-practice informative narrative writing program on ninth grade writing competence (Doctoral dissertation, University of Houston). Dissertation Abstracts International, 47, 407A.

Pisano, R. (1980). The effectiveness of an intervention study in critical thinking skills designed to improve written composition in eleventh and twelfth graders (Doctoral dissertation, Rutgers University The State U. of New Jersey). Dissertation Abstracts International, 41, 192A.

Reilly, J. (1986). The effects of prewriting on literary interpretation. San Francisco, CA: American Educational Research Association. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 276 058)

Reynolds, F. (1987). Writing as a way of learning in a tenth grade biology class (Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri). Dissertation Abstracts International. 48, 2237A.

Sanders, S., & Littlefield, J. (1977). Perhaps test essays can reflect significant improvement in freshmen composition. Research in the Teaching of English, 9, 145-163.

Shaughnessey, M. (1977). Errors and expectations. New York: Oxford University Press.

Strugala, R. A. (1983). The need for college writing programs: Changes in student attitudes, behaviors, self-esteem and writing ability in students enrolled in writing courses (Doctoral dissertation, Rutgers University, New Jersey). Dissertation Abstracts International, 44, 2122A.

Taylor, K. (1987). Teaching writing in the GED program. Lifelong Learning, 10 (4), 23-28.

Troyka, L. (1973). A study of the effects of simulation-gaming on expository prose competence of college remedial English composition students (Doctoral dissertation, New York University). Dissertation Abstracts International, 34, 4092A.

White, E. & Polin, L. (1986). Research in effective teaching of writing. (Volumes I and II: Final project report). Los Angeles, CA: California State University Foundation. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 275 007)

Wood, B. (1978). A structured program for teaching composition in senior high school English classes (Doctoral dissertation, University of Alabama, 1977). Dissertation Abstracts International, 39, 2173A.

Woodward, J. & Phillips, A. (1967). Profile of the poor writer. Research in the Teaching of English, 1, 41-53.

Ziv, N.D. (1984). The effect of teacher comments on the writing of four college freshmen. In R.Beach & J.Bridell (Eds.), New directions in composition research (pp. 362-380). New York: The Guilford Press.

APPENDIX A

Instructions and Guidelines for Essay Writing

General Guidelines for Essay Writing

1. You will be expected to write an essay of 250-300 words (2 to 3 pages double-spaced) answering the question, "Do we need stricter gun control in Canada?"

2. The essay should include at least three detailed arguments supporting your opinion on this issue. A simple listing of the many possible arguments will result in a low mark. As such, those arguments felt to be most important should be chosen and supported by details taken mainly from the readings handed out in class. You may also use first-hand experience and information taken from other sources, but these should not be relied upon.

Specific Content Guidelines for Essay Writing

The following are definitions and examples of different types of information, ordered from higher to lower levels, which may be integrated into your essays. Essays receiving higher scores will generally have more of the higher level types of information.

1. Superordinate Concept: A higher category concept. e.g. A sawed-off shotgun is a type of prohibited weapon.
2. Definition: A comprehensive description. e.g. A prohibited weapon is one which has no legitimate recreational use and therefore may be dangerous to personal safety.
3. Linking: Comparison of one concept to another. e.g. Banning certain types of weapons to block criminal activity is like banning certain types of cars to stop drunk driving.
4. Analogy: Comparisons for a literal idea. e.g. The gun is the ultimate machine in the war against humanity.
5. Example: Something specific to a category. e.g. An example of a restricted weapon is a pistol.
6. Defining Characteristic: Defines an important part of something. e.g. A government makes laws.
7. Association: What does the word make you think of? e.g. 'Black market" may make you think of a papaya.
8. First-hand Experience: A reaction based on experience. e.g. Your only experience with the word "warrant" may be an arrest you saw on television.

APPENDIX B

Audio-visual Materials Used for Classroom Discussion

These materials and their original sources are not included as obtaining copyright permission was not considered practicable and presentation of this data not essential to understanding the research. Utilized were tables and graphs presenting Canadian statistics on opinions about the issue of gun control, the amount of gun ownership and the use of guns in selected crimes. As well, cartoons illustrating the various views on gun control were used.

APPENDIX C

Literature, Vocabulary, and Comprehension Questions

Topic-specific Literature

These materials are not included here as obtaining copyright permission was not felt to be practicable and presentation of this data not considered essential to understanding or replicating this research. Utilized were a variety of Canadian government documents on gun control legislation and magazine and newspaper articles reporting the arguments surrounding the issue of gun control. A partial list of some of these documents and articles and their sources is provided below.

Bunning, F. (1989, June). Right to bear (and die) by arms. Maclean's, p. 13.

Department of Justice Canada. (1978). Gun control in Canada: Working together to save lives (JUS-P-407). Ottawa, ON: Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

For and against (Bill C-17). (1991, August). Montreal Gazette, p. A6.

Koch, G. (1991, January). No right to bear arms. Alberta Report, pp. 6-9.

Magnuson, E. (1989, August). Do guns save lives? Time (Can ed), pp. 21-22.

More weapons mean more shootings. (1989, December). Vancouver Sun, p. A1, A18.

Reason, passion at gun hearing: Students argue with determination, cops add emotion. (1990, December). Montreal Gazette, p. B1.

White, C. (1991, October). Search for a law. Canada and the World, pp. 8-9.

Canadian Gun Control Legislation

Vocabulary

firearm-
weapon-
prohibited weapon-
restricted weapon-
mandatory prohibition-
discretionary prohibition-
preemptive prohibition-
legislation-
cartridge magazine-
sentence-
screening-
semi-automatic weapons-

Comprehension Questions

Current Gun Control Legislation in Canada

1. What are the major objectives of gun control?
2. Define prohibited weapons and give some examples of them.
3. a) Define restricted weapons and give some examples.
   b) What does a person need to own a restricted weapon?
   c) What are five legal reasons to own a restricted weapon?
4. a) What privilege is given for possession of a Firearms Acquisition Certificate?
   b) List briefly five reasons for refusal of a Firearms Acquisition Certificate.
5. What rights do minors have to use guns? (One sentence).
6. When may a warrant for arrest be issued by police? A search be made without a warrant?
7. What are four reasons for prohibiting the use or ownership of any firearm?
8. What are the penalties for:
   a) Making a false statement to get a gun permit?
   b) Pointing a firearm at another person?
   c) Transporting firearms carefully?
   d) Carrying concealed weapons without a permit?
   e) Giving, lending or selling weapons to minors or persons of unsound mind?

Background to Current Legislation

1. Why did gun control legislation not evolve in isolation?
2. What happened in 1937? 1934? 1951?

Improving Canada's System of Firearms Control: Proposals (1991)

1. Why has new legislation been recently proposed?
2. What are three accepted uses of firearms?
3. What generally happened to firearm deaths and robberies after 1979 legislation and up to 1991?
4. What things are to be banned completely?
5. What about parental consent and storage for weapons?
6. What about sentences for offences?
7. a) What are the new screening guidelines?
   b) How will firepower be limited?
   c) What changes in storage regulations are proposed?
   d) What changes in the number of years in jail are proposed?
8. What things are there about the proposals which would support your opinion that laws are either too strong or too weak?

Arguments For and Against Gun Control

Vocabulary

For and Against

converted-
exemption-
magazine capacity-
bureaucracy-
silencer-
marksmanship-

Search for a Law

ammunition clips-
loopholes-

No Right to Bear Arms

sanctions-
stringent-
firearms constituency-
deter-

Comprehension Questions

General Articles

Search for a Law

1. Why do advocates of stricter gun control think it's too easy to get guns? (Four reasons)
2. Why do the police support tougher gun laws?
3. What is the fear of gun control advocates about gun magazine size?
4. State four points given against stricter gun control and eight points given for tougher gun control.

No Right to Bear Arms

(see page 7)

1. What is the fear of those who oppose tougher gun control?
2. How does violent crime in Canada compare to the U.S. ?
3. Why are gun owners incensed by Miss Campbell's proposals?

(see page 9)

Briefly summarize the following arguments against gun control and present your own counterarguments if you can.

1. Magazine size limitation.
2. Equating gun ownership with crime.
3. Rape and firearms.
4. Firearm murder and women.

What two things other than gun control do gun users suggest may prevent crime?

Articles Supporting Stricter Gun Control

Do Guns Save Lives?

1. What two positive things can guns be used for according to some?
2. What claim is made in support of guns?
3. What are the problems with this claim? (Two points)

More Weapons Mean More Shootings

1. Why may some people talk about shootings?
2. Why is the Vancouver police chief disturbed by current trends in gun use?
3. State four statistics which support tougher gun laws.

Reason, Passion at Gun Hearing

1. What is the position of each of people mentioned in the article?
2. Summarize two complaints given against gun control.

Six Killed in Swiss Rampage

1. What happened? How?
2. Why did the killings take place according to the writer?

Articles Opposing Stricter Gun Control

The Right to Bear (and die) by Arms

1. What do many American men and women love according to the writer?
2. Why is gun ownership sacred to some Americans?
3. What will happen in 1989 in American schools?

The Voice Ottawa Doesn't Want to Hear

1. What in general does Damgaard say about Bill C-80?
2. What three points does he make against tighter laws?
3. Who does Damgaard think will gain power by the new laws?

Deterrence and Interdiction

1. What is deterrence?
2. What is interdiction?
3. What is the position of the NRA?
4. Summarize briefly each of the arguments presented against gun control including (a) crime and guns, (b) collecting illegal guns, and (c) international laws.

APPENDIX D

Models of Written Arguments on Experimental Topic

Argument Supporting Stricter Gun Control Legislation

It is far too easy to purchase any type of gun in Canada. For one thing, while gun advocates argue that there is too much red tape involved in purchasing a weapon, the current gun registration system allows for the possession of weapons by those who should clearly not own them. Psychologically imbalanced persons can purchase firearms since psychiatrists may not release or even be aware of the violent behavior or potentially dangerous attitudes of their patients. The killing of fourteen Montreal women is only one example of the possible outcome of this situation. Young people with an ownership permit can obtain as many weapons as they please, while unlicensed users can borrow guns from licensed owners if parental consent and limited training is provided. Under these conditions, youths can and do acquire guns to play with unsupervised, to show their macho, and in increasingly more instances, to commit violent crimes. Secondly, while gun proponents claim that black markets run by criminals are another result of gun control, certain weapons needed only in open warfare are easily obtainable under current legislation. The purchase of 45,000 semi-automatic weapons in 1990 in Canada and the refusal of only four ownership applications are strong evidence of this laxity. These weapons are capable of firing in rapid succession and hardly fair to those animals being hunted with them. Aren't the rights of these animals and the personal freedoms of those afraid to walk the streets at night because of such weapons as important as the freedoms of those wanting to own them?

Argument Opposing Stronger Gun Control

Stricter gun laws will interfere with the rights of those who must own guns and with the personal liberties of other responsible gun owners. The police and the military depend on guns for the roles that they fulfill in society. Without full access to weaponry, these people will be unable to protect the public or to control armed standoffs. Trappers require guns in order to secure food and protect themselves from wild animals. Tougher gun laws would seriously restrict their abilities to maintain their livelihood. Ranchers and farmers would be prevented from protecting their livestock from predators. Large numbers of cattle and other livestock are taken each year and economic losses are substantial. Tighter gun laws would make outlaws of many sports people. The proposed ban on semi-automatic weapons would eliminate certain Olympic events. Trap shooting and target practice, widespread hobbies, would be severely reduced, while sports hunting would be limited. Gun sports help to develop concentration, are effective relaxants and necessary aspects of social life for many. Finally, while retailers would be deprived of the right to sell what they wish to in a supposedly free society, consumers may also be unable to purchase what they like. Tighter gun control would only hamper harmless gun owners while doing nothing to control the criminal use of guns.

APPENDIX E

Motivational Data Used to Introduce Control Topic

Names of authors were not available and so this data is not included here to avoid copyright infringement. Shown to students on overhead projections were a number of highly detailed fact sheets on air, water and noise pollution which emphasized the detrimental effects of these phenomena.

APPENDIX F

Instructions and Guidelines for Essay Testing

Preparation for Essay Writing

You will be given 10 minutes for each of the 3 arguments that you selected to jot down everything that you can remember about them. You will be assigned to write on only one of the following two topics today.

Topic 1- Why do we need to have better protection of our environment against pollution?

Topic 2- Should Canadian gun control legislation be stronger?

Write down as much as you can in the time allotted for each argument, keeping in mind that information provided should be as specific as possible. Keep your main ideas in mind as you do this try and to think of all the articles that you studied. Make the technical words you use clear by explaining them fully.

Essay Writing Test

Write an argumentative essay of 2 to 3 pages on the topic assigned to you today. If you can't remember much about a particular argument that you are using, add any information that supports your opinion and makes your essay long and detailed enough. Address your essay to the regular classroom teacher as part of the English 10 course requirements.

APPENDIX G

Criteria and Prototypes for Holistic Quality Scoring

Criteria for Holistic Quality Score of Four (4)

Content

Paragraph topics. Essay presents one (1) valid argument for each of three (3) distinct developmental paragraphs. Each argument is clearly stated and answers the assignment question by developing the thesis statement.

Major details. Two (2) to four (4) distinct,valid ideas which clearly develop their respective argument and are clearly stated. More general than minor details.

Minor details. One (and often 2 or more) elaborative details are used to develop most major details. Most of these details are clearly relevant to the preceding levels of discussion, quite specific and apparently accurate. Selection of minor details reflects more study and reading than everyday experience (which is likely to produce more details which are more general, less accurate and possibly less relevant to preceding levels of discussion).

Note: The amount, relevancy, validity, specificity and accuracy of the above types of information are are judged in relation to literature on the subtopic to which they apply.

Organization

Introduction. Generally effective attention-getting information and a thesis statement are provided in an introductory paragraph.

Coherence. All paragraphs exhibit a generally logical and smooth flow of most details as well as generally appropriate and effective use of transitional devices to link them.

Unity. Most Major and minor details are clearly relevant to paragraph topics.

Conclusion. Generally effective final paragraph which sums up the essay and closes with a recommendation, question or other final thought.

Mechanics

Generally few errors in spelling, sentence structure, capitalization or punctuation which make meanings unclear. Grammar errors are not considered unless they produce problems of comprehensibility.

Prototype for Holistic Quality Score of Four (4)

First of all, 10 dollars wouldn't stop anybody from getting a Firearms Acquisition Certificate- FAC in short. To get a FAC, they don't have to take a test as difficult as a driving test, so they can get an FAC easier than a driver's licence. Police do the test before issue an FAC, but that doesn't reveal if a person is depressed or abusive. Moreover, doctor won't release any information about mental health. Marc Lepine looked very normal before he gunned down 14 people. A restricted weapon can fire many bullets with one pull of the trigger. Last year, 45,000 restricted weapon applications were registered; only 4 were refused. And youths at the age of 16, the age of unmature, easy to get angry, and quickly to make a wrong decision, can get gun legally. With one FAC he can get guns, as many as he wants. The officer's 17 years old son in Ottawa committed crime involving firearm is an example.

Criteria for Holistic Quality Score of Three (3)

Content

Paragraph topics. Essay presents three (3) distinct, valid arguments, all of which develop the thesis statement. One of the arguments may be less clearly stated.

Major details. Developmental paragraphs contain generally fewer major details which may also be less distinct and /or relevant than those in essays scored four.

Minor details. Generally fewer distinct details used to elaborate than were used in essays scored four. Details used may be less relevant, clear and/or specific and may reflect more everyday experience than reading and study compared to essays scored four.

Organization

May display any or all of the following in relation to essays scored four:

Introduction. Less clear thesis statement and/or attention-getting information.

Coherence. May be less logical and/or smooth with less effective use of transitions. Connection of ideas may be more list-like and /or less thoughtful than essays scored four.

Unity. Most major and minor details are relevant to the paragraph topic.

Conclusion. May be less effective in terms of summing up and/or interest. May be absent.

Mechanics

Generally few errors in spelling, sentence structure, punctuation and capitalization but may be more than in essays.scored four.

Prototype of Writing Receiving Holistic Quality Score of Three (3)

First of all, Firearms Acquisition Certificates are far to easy to get. For a low fee of ten dollars, anyone can apply for one, even teenagers. A doctor's fee should also be necessary when applying to state the person's stability, stating that he isn't psychotic. Marc Lepine appeared normal when he was interviewed for his permit. He shot fourteen women on a campus in Montreal. Out of all the FACs applied for, a minor one percent are refused and only four percent of restricted weapon permits were denied. A restricted weapon being a firearm that is capable of firing rapidly with one pull of the trigger. There should definitely be stricter laws here.

Criteria for Holistic Quality Score of Two (2)

Content

Paragraph topics. May be fewer than three arguments which are not clearly introduced in topic sentences and/or not clearly relevant to the thesis.and/or more recommendations than they are arguments.

Major topics. Generally not clearly stated and have weak connections to to the thesis or paragraph topics. Often only one or two distinct major details per argument (paragraph).

Minor details. May be often more general and based more on personal experience than on reading and study. May also be sparse, inaccurate, irrelevant or unimportant. May be more like recommendations which also do not answer the specific question assigned for writing on the topic.

Note: Essays scored two are generally shorter than those scored three or four.

Organization

Introduction. May lack clear thesis statement and/or interest and be poorly organized.

Coherence. Ideas are often connected in a list-like manner rather than by appropriate transitions.

Unity. May be some ideas which are irrelevant to a given paragraph topic.

Conclusion. May be absent or weaker than those for essays scored three.

Mechanics

May be considerable errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and/or sentence structure which interfere with comprehension of meaning and/or weaken coherence.

Prototype of Writing Receiving Holistic Quality Score of Two (2)

It's getting easier to get an EFC these days. Because of the low $10 fee, it is too affordable for those who are not interested in collecting guns or those who need it for food and to support their families with. Only 1%, 4 out of 45,000 applicants were refused last year. This is an astonding number of people who own guns that are registered. In Canada 21% of people own gun licences, also in Alberta 39% of people own gun licences. That's alot of people with guns that the government is aware of.

Criteria for Holistic Quality Score of One (1)

Content

Paragraph topics. Two or fewer distinct arguments which may not be introduced clearly or are not clearly relevant to the writing question or topic.

Major details. Generally two or fewer distinct supporting points. May be stated as specific examples rather than general points.

Minor points. May be absent, very general and experience based, inaccurate and/or unimportant.

Note: Likely to be quite short and lacking development compared to higher scoring essays.

Organization

Introduction. Absent, short and/or lacks attention-getting information and clear thesis statement.

Coherence. Quite weak. May be a listing of information.

Unity. Usually weak, depending on the presence of a topic sentence.

Conclusion. Usually absent; if present, short and ineffective.

Mechanics

Considerable errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization and/or sentence structure.

Prototype of Writing Receiving Holistic Quality Score of One (1)

One thing of gun control is it's too easy for anyone to have a gun legally or illegally. legally a 16 year old with 10 dollars could go out and purchase an FAC (firearms acquisition certificate) then, he or she may purchase any amount of any weapon with ammunition. Illegally, people with guns seem to have know problems in having them in their possession, therefore crimes and murder keep happening.